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The Fulness of Jesus;

OR,

DEVOUT REFLECTIONS UPON THE RELATIONS OF CHRIST TO HIS PEOPLE.

BY THE

REV. G. CROWTHER SMITH,

CURATE OF ST. PAUL'S, CHATHAM.



"GROW IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST."

LONDON: WILLIAM MACINTOSH,

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1866.

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TO THE RIGHT REVEREND J. C. WIGRAM, D.D.,
LORD BISHOP OF ROCHESTER.

MY DEAR LORD BISHOP,

Believing that the truths contained in this Book are those which our Church holds and teaches, I am most grateful to your Lordship for your kind permission to dedicate it to you, as a grateful expression of the many kindnesses I have received from you, and as a humble memorial of the fact that your Lordship conferred upon me the Holy Orders both of Deacon and Priest: thus giving me authority to exercise my ministry and to teach and preach these truths in our beloved Church.

I am,

MY DEAR LORD BISHOP,

Yours faithfully and obediently,

G. CROWTHER SMITH.

October, 1866.

P R E F A C E.

THERE is, in the Church of Christ, a spirit of deep anxiety concerning the development of a higher spiritual life. The eagerness with which books of a truly spiritual character are purchased and read is some indication of this. This little work aims to contribute, in some humble measure, to the nurture and growth of the life that is spiritual. It is composed under the belief that nothing will accomplish that end but a real union with the living Saviour, and that He has revealed Himself to us in various titles and relationships to meet our necessities, and by them to unite us more closely to Himself.

Those titles and relations have a deeper significance than appears on the surface. They meant much more to the inspired writers of the Bible than we now seem to understand by them. The following chapters are an attempt to unfold something of their spiritual meaning.

The Holy Spirit of God can alone reveal the deep things of Christ to the individual heart, but yet He can and will bless any human effort to the same end.

The importance of an actual realization of our vital interest in Christ is generally acknowledged ; but to all who have struggled to attain this, and to those alone, the difficulty of arriving at this goal, and of remaining there, is also known and felt. The one great answer to that difficulty, it is believed, is to be found in rightly comprehending the fulness of Christ, as He is revealed in the relations He sustains to His people. In them we see the suitability of the Saviour to our hourly necessities. As we receive Him in these varied relations, we are raised to a higher piety ; we are delivered from the abyss of doubt, of wretchedness, of sin ; we live, move, and have our being in Him.

And as we continue to embrace Christ in these relations we are more and more amazed at His infinite fulness, His love and care for His people, and His ability to meet all their necessities.

But this implies the continual annihilation of self and the exaltation of Christ. Any effort, therefore, that tends to aid the Christian in this, to bring him nearer to Christ, and to bring Christ nearer to him, will assuredly be welcomed by the spiritual and devout.

In this belief the Author prayerfully commits this work to Him who has said, "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days."

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THE FULNESS OF JESUS.

CHAPTER I.

A KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST.

PHIL. III. 10.—“That I may know Him.”

2 PETER III. 18.—“Grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

JOHN XVII. 3.—“That they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”

It is too often assumed, even among Christians, that we know all about Christ. Is it not taken for granted that, when we have believed in the facts of His life, death, and resurrection, and understood their spiritual meaning—that He suffered thus as our substitute—that this is knowing Christ? But

when we even know Him thus, is this knowing Him? Surely not; His fulness is infinite. To know Him fully and perfectly may well be regarded as the best employment of a whole life.

We may know Him as the atonement for sin, and as the sinner's substitute, and still be ignorant of Him in many aspects and relations of His character in which it is of the greatest importance we should know Him. We may, for example, have learnt to believe in Christ as our Saviour from sin and its consequences, and yet be cast down through fear of death, because we have not sufficiently known or believed in Him as the resurrection and the life, so as to enable us, by the knowledge of Him in this aspect, to overcome the fear of death; or, in our worldly trouble, we may not have looked to Him as our living Comforter, who says, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me;" "Cast all your care upon me."

There is not a state or mood of sorrow, of inability, or unhappiness, but there is a revelation of Christ to suit exactly that state or mood. To discover how the living Saviour is suited to those varied moods is the discipline and work of a life. Endless as seem the phases of our experience, the infinite fulness of Jesus more than answers to them all. To know this is "to know the only true God,

and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent." This is what St. Paul desired when he said, "That I may know Him;" "That I may win Christ;" "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God which is in Christ Jesus." This was the language of an *inspired Apostle*; and yet *we* sometimes imagine all is attained, and that we know all about Jesus, because we know Him in one aspect or relation. This is as absurd as for a child, who has read some of the New Testament narratives, to say, "Oh, I know all about them." The scholar, the student, feels even *he* has not yet understood all their meaning. But, though the scholar may know this, it is hard to make the child feel it; and the Christian who supposes he knows all about Christ is just like that child; and, though divines and even angels may feel, respecting such a Christian, as we do about such a child, yet it is difficult to lead the Christian to see and feel his ignorance of Christ. If we felt this more, in what a different spirit should we open the Bible, attend all God's

ordinances, and wait upon Him in prayer! We have only *begun* to know Christ when we know Him as the Saviour who gives us peace and rest. We must advance to the knowledge of Him as not only able continually to give us this rest and peace, but to increase it to the highest joy. We have yet to learn, by actual experience, the tenderness and depths of His love, the extent of His forbearance, the riches of His goodness, the perfection of His sympathy, the real might of His help, the reality of His presence, the immensity of His blessings, the rich stores and abundant supplies of His grace, that He will enable us to be mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, and, in His name and in His strength, to effect great conquests over ourselves and the world, and to attain to heights of holiness until we are conformed to His image. Thus may we learn that *His fulness* can and will supply all our emptiness and need. His strength can become ours in our weakness, His light ours in darkness, His peace ours in disquiet, His joy ours in sorrow. And thus all our varied phases and experiences and moods must and will centre around the living Saviour, and lead us to be united ever with Him.

All the names and titles given to Jesus by the Holy Spirit in His Word (between three and four hundred) have this purpose in view—so to exhibit

Christ to us, in different relations, that we may come to know Him. Probably, also, many, if not all, of the experiences of our lives are permitted and sent for this purpose—that we may know the infinite fulness and preciousness there is in the almighty loving Saviour. It was Christ's most fervent prayer, even for His loved disciples, that they *might know Him*. It was the object of the most ardent ambition of an inspired Apostle, who had even seen and believed in Christ, that he *might know Him*. Angels desire to look into these things, that they *may know Him*. May it not well be the purpose of our lives, the object of our holiest ambition, of our most ardent study, most fervent desires and prayers, that we *may know Him*, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent?

CHAPTER II.

THE REALITY OF HIS PRESENCE.

MATT. XXVIII. 20.—“Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”

JOHN XIV. 23.—“If a man love me, he will keep my words : and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”

GAL. II. 20.—“Christ liveth in me.”

It is acknowledged there is a great difference in the influence exerted by belief in creeds and doctrines, and by belief in a living person. The influence of belief in a living person seems to be not only what we most want, but what exerts a great influence over us. Hence we find all the inspired writers present a person—Christ Jesus, the living Saviour—before us; the Apostles especially do this. We know ourselves how little influence a mere abstraction exerts upon us; but the presence of a living person is often very powerful. The

entrance even of one friend into a little company, or a room, is often sensibly felt. So the presence of Jesus is no less *real*, though we cannot see Him. We are conscious when He is present by the influence He exerts. When He is permitted to dwell in the heart *sin* departs, guilty fears all vanish, there is no more thought of condemnation, every cloud of despondency is dispersed, and peace and hope and joy assert their right and reign.

The Saviour ever *liveth*. True, we think of Him as in heaven, but He lives none the less here upon the earth. His presence can be realized and enjoyed by us all. Why do we realize the presence of the Saviour so little? Since He is a spirit, He is capable of being carried into all that we do. Why do we not so carry Him? The cause cannot be in Christ. He says, "I am with you always;" "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you." If there is one thing plainer than another in Scripture, it is the willingness of Christ to give always His own presence to His people. He loves to dwell in the human heart. He made it for His temple and dwelling-place, and when defiled He determined to purify it, so that He might come and dwell in it again.

And how blessed a thing is it *always* to realize this presence—continually to have the conscious-

ness of it! It may be with more or less distinctness or power, but it is not impossible, as some imagine. Just as we have the consciousness of our own being, so we can have the consciousness of the being of Christ in us. Should we like to say at any moment, at any given period of our lives, "Now we can do without Christ"? Surely not; no one would like to say this in so many words; and yet we often act and think as though we did not wish sensibly to enjoy His presence. And yet what we most want is a present realization of Christ. This is spiritual life. Life, from its very nature, is a present blessing enjoyed now. Not *to be* now is death. The past supplies of food and air for the body, however ample and good, will not now sustain life; neither will the recollection of former religious experiences. It is the living Christ, daily and hourly believed in, we want, if we would have life. He is here for us. Oh, let us take and eat, and live for ever. Think of the number of times He has come to man with this purpose in view—to bless him with His presence. To our first parents He came for this purpose, even when they had sinned. To Moses, as the representative of the rebellious children of Israel, He came and said, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Then He came as man for this same object. We can see how earnestly He was then bent upon giving His presence to men by

His repeated invitations to them to come to Him. Would He have given those invitations if He had not been willing to give His own presence? yea, more than willing; may we not say intensely anxious to give it. So now He is equally anxious to come and dwell in the hearts of men. He proves it by His living invitations, equally addressed to us all; by the outward agencies He employs; by the inward monitions we experience from Him. Rest assured, if you do not realize His presence, the cause is in your own heart; it is because you will not have Him; you reject Him; you insult Him by admitting His enemy and your own, *sin*. Christ says to you now, I will come to you again; and, though you have rejected me a thousand times, I will even give you *strength* to enable you to cast sin from your heart, and the very will you feel you need to desire my presence, if only you will look to me for it and receive it, I will impart to you,—“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

CHAPTER III.

OUR SAVIOUR.

HEBREWS VI. 6.—“They crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame.”

1 COR. I. 24.—“Christ the power of God.”

MATT. I. 21.—“Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins.”

CHRIST is too often thought of only as saving us from the *guilt and consequences* of sin, and from hell; and thus we are not brought frequently enough into communion with Christ, because we go to Him only for these purposes. But He is more than this; He is the Saviour who ever liveth “to save *His people from their sins*,” i.e., from sinning. Oh, had you but known and believed in Christ in this aspect and relation, how many sins that now cause your conscience guilty pangs, had you been saved from committing?

The thought of the living Saviour and of His

presence, always acts as *a restraint* upon sin. What servant would dare to steal with his master's eye upon him? What child would disobey before his father's face? Who can yield to sin with the deep consciousness of a living Saviour within him? For deeds of evil, men love darkness; they seldom dare perform them in open day. So we dare not sin with the broad blaze of the Redeemer, the light of the world, shining in upon our hearts. When the presence of Jesus is realized, the desire and love of sin are taken away. The soul moves in a holy atmosphere. The heart is full—pre-occupied with other and purer thoughts; there is no room for sin. The presence of Jesus brings us new joys. We fear to lose them. We know sin will cause Him to depart, and those joys will be gone. This leads us to avoid it as we should poison, or the bite of a serpent; to put at once a check upon the first rising emotions towards sin in the secret thoughts of our heart. *Sin promises us new enjoyment*; but the heart that has Christ has enjoyment enough. It wants no new, no higher enjoyment, than it has in Christ. Having the presence of Jesus we have the mind of Christ concerning sin. We know how He feels respecting it. Sin alone caused Him to use angry words of denunciation. We are able then to understand that expression, "Seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God

afresh, and put Him to an open shame." This passage presents Christ to us as taking an interest still in all that is going on; as rejoicing in our goodness and triumphs; as suffering when we sin; yes, and as so suffering as that for His people to sin, is to crucify the Son of God afresh, and to put Him to an open shame. For them to sin is to cause Him as much pain as when on Calvary, in the place of sinners, when the mental anguish He endured crushed His spirit, and caused Him that dreadful extreme of agony and grief when He exclaimed, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Strange that this purpose of Christ's mission should be so forgotten and overlooked. All those passages which speak of Christ as saving sinners, as able to save unto the uttermost, have, in the minds of many, the strangely confined limitation of saving from hell, or from the consequences of sin in the past, and of bringing them into a state of justification. They have this meaning, but must not be limited to it. *Sin* is what the Saviour hates; all His honour—all His justice, power, and love, are engaged to save, especially from sinning. The great purpose of His mission is "to sanctify to Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." If He delivers from the consequences of sin in the past, it is in order that, so to speak, a platform may be

raised, on which to rear a life of holy, sinless living in the future. Jesus directs to His blood and sacrifice, and promises, "there is no condemnation to them who believe;" only that they may be able with a light heart to go on to the performance of duty, and of the will of God in the future. We cannot—dare not,—doubt either His ability or willingness to save His people from their sins. If He is able and willing to forgive them their sins, how much more is He able and willing to save them from sinning.

Dear reader, you have all your life been striving to overcome sin, but you have never succeeded. No wonder. You never can, in and of yourself, nor even by some vague notion, that God, you know not how, will help you to overcome it; but by believing in Jesus as the living Saviour who will save His people from their sins, you can overcome sin. Sin shall not have dominion over you, but you over it. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." When then you are tempted to sin, think of the living Saviour. Lift up your eyes to Him. Think of what sin cost Him. Think of His life—holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. Realize His presence. Think of Him as now living without sin in heaven. Think of Him as ready to chasten—to punish—to help—to restrain,—to deliver from the very wish and desire

to sin by His own presence—as able to turn the very will in a contrary direction, and to close the very doors of the heart against every evil thought. Strive then against sin by looking unto Jesus. Remember that the very purpose for which this life is given you is that you may by discipline and trial learn to overcome sin and be conformed to the Saviour's image.

This view of Christ is of special importance to the young. How great is the value of this knowledge of Christ in early life to you. Let the misery it will free you from, and the blessings and happiness it will bring, be the reply. How important for you to know that your heart can be so wholly pre-occupied with Christ that there will be no room for sin. The knowledge of Christ is sufficient to fill the chambers of the imagination; to exercise the memory—the judgment—the reasoning powers—all the faculties of the man to the fullest extent. Those among the young are blest indeed who grasp this truth in early life, and receive it into their hearts, and incorporate it into their lives. They will be happy and useful in life. They will have a Divine power within them, enabling them to effect triumphs, and enter upon joys, which of themselves they never could effect or realize—and in the heavenly world they will shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars, for ever and ever.

CHAPTER IV.

CHRIST THE OBJECT OF OUR FAITH.

ACTS XVI. 31.—“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”

JOHN III. 15.—“Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

HEBREWS XII. 2.—“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.”

CHRISTIAN teaching has led to the acknowledgment that all the blessings we derive from Christ must be by faith in Him; and yet the very expression is sometimes a difficulty, and a stumbling-block. It is so simple, and yet there is so much involved in it. It has its synonyms or words substituted for it, which all more or less help us to come to the understanding of it. It would much help us if we would examine the terms the Scriptures employ to set forth the state of mind we understand by faith. Thus it is *belief* in what God has said in His Word,

and in Christ Himself. It is *confidence* in Him. It is simply taking God at His word. It is *trust*, or committing ourselves to Him. It is the *waiting upon* Him of the Psalmist. Again, it is *looking and coming* to Christ. It is abiding in Christ. It is eating Christ's body and drinking His blood. The heart feeding upon Him. Therefore the Bible answer to every inquirer is always the best. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." And yet it often causes confusion in the minds of some, to know what is the exact thing a sinner is to believe, in order to be saved? To this we reply, it is belief in a Saviour God, who has taken all the guilt of sin upon Himself, who suffered as a sacrifice for, and in the place of the guilty, and now lives to give pardon and repentance to the sons of men on the ground of His finished work. This is the precise thing that saves when believed. But it is evident that faith is exercised about a number of other things—sin and its guilt—God and His justice—the life of Christ—His sufferings—His death—His resurrection—any one of which may more especially be employed by the Spirit of God to excite to faith in Jesus Christ as the atonement for sin.

The believer, because always a sinner, needs to exercise faith ALWAYS in the substitutionary character of Christ's work. He can obtain peace in no other way, no more than a sinner can, who is jus

believing. And yet faith in its exercise is not, or should not be, confined to the substitutionary character of Christ's work. Rising from this, the soul is prepared to exercise faith in all that Christ is ; in all the relations He is capable of sustaining to us in life ; in all He has done, and in all He has promised to be and to do. This is a life-long exercise, and a life-long struggle. Every obstruction, however dear it may be to us, must be removed, if it would intercept our view of the Saviour. The two-fold action of faith, implied in the foregoing Scriptural use and description of it, must be continued. The one class of terms showing *its one action—receiving all from God ;* and the other—*giving all up to God.* Christ is the object of our faith ; we receive Him in all He has done for us : in all He is to us ; but this very receiving implies that we give up ourselves to Him. This is the faith that justifies and saves—brings us peace with God, and ensures us every other blessing. The Bible, for this reason, gives this prominence to faith, "Without faith, it is impossible to please God." When we cry, "Lord, increase our faith," with a right understanding of what faith comprehends and includes, we in effect pray for every other blessing in the germ. But for its exercise it is of the utmost importance we should distinguish faith from a mere passive feeling on the one hand, or a gift on the other,

bestowed upon a favoured few, and which is far beyond our reach. If the previous explanation of faith be correct, it will be seen that it calls into active exercise the will, and all the powers of the man. It concerns itself about the state of heart and mind. It subordinates all to God. It yields everything up to Him, and seeks above all things to know and to do His will. But it does not end here. It not only yields all up to God, but it receives all from God. No logical definition can with sufficient clearness exhibit the twofold action of faith. It is better felt than described—experienced than defined. And yet it is a common action of the mind between man and man, and receives abundant illustration in the transactions of our daily life. We cannot even take a common journey, and commit ourselves to a railway train, or a steam vessel, without in some measure exercising confidence or trust. We commit ourselves, our very lives to them, and we receive from them certain advantages that we desire. We admit how faintly this illustrates the spiritual action of faith—as all earthly things but imperfectly illustrate spiritual and heavenly ; but we have the same action of the mind in both cases, only the matter of salvation about which faith concerns itself is of tremendous and infinite import. Now, if we would always have peace and assurance, and the conscious enjoyment of all spiritual blessings, it is evident *we*

must always have faith in conscious exercise. If you lose the enjoyment of these blessings you know the reason ; it is not because God has changed in His love, but it is because you have turned away the eyes of your mind from the living Saviour. This will likewise show you how to regain your lost blessings : “ Look unto me, and be ye saved.” A child in knowledge—in attainments, can look—can trust—can receive. This is our direction. These are our standing orders. Trust in Jesus. The Christian life must begin with it. The Christian life must continually be supported by it. The Christian life can be carried on and triumphantly completed only by the exercise of a living faith in a living Saviour.

CHAPTER V.

A PRESENT POSSESSION.

1 JOHN V. 12.—“He that hath the Son hath life.”

JOHN III. 36.—“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.”

JOHN XVII. 26.—“I in them.”

RELIGION is too often made to refer mainly to the future world. Many think and speak of it only as a salvation from hell. Others as a restraint upon sin, or as a duty that must be endured. Even many Christians who have a higher view of it, do not we fear, rise to this the highest and most glorious privilege of all. *The living Saviour dwelling within us, and we ourselves consciously possessing and enjoying Him.* Jesus says, “If a man love me he will keep my words, and my father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” “Know ye not,” says the Apostle, “that Jesus Christ is in you except ye be


reprobates." "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." This is nothing more nor less than Christ by His Spirit dwelling in us, inhabiting our bodies as really and as truly as our own spirit inhabits our own body. And not merely is it that Christ may dwell in us, but that we are as conscious of that indwelling as we are of our own being. The blessedness of this realization language cannot describe. It is one of those things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, but which God reveals to us by His Spirit.

When thus revealed and embraced, it brings happiness and peace beyond everything else. The soul calmly abides in Jesus, walks in His light, and drinks continually at the fountain of His love. This is the well of water which shall be in a man springing up to everlasting life. If we possess Christ we possess all He is, all He gives; and all He brings, life eternal, pardon, peace, happiness, joy, holiness. How much do we all need His manifest and realized presence! Our hearts were made to be His temple where He should dwell. If He does not dwell there really and consciously, what wonder that there is an aching void; what wonder that nothing can fill it, and that it should remain empty after all our attempts? Jesus only can fill the soul so as to satisfy its immortal yearnings. We need Him to sustain us in our hours of conflict, in

our varied experiences "every passing hour." No dogma will do; no doctrine will sustain; it must be the blessed Saviour Himself. With the consciousness of Jesus in our hearts, what need we to fear? In every storm, in every trial, we shall hear His voice saying, "It is I, be not afraid."

Do you ask, How can Jesus be thus realized? How can I thus possess Him, and continually live in the conscious enjoyment of this possession? Jesus Himself tells you. You must love Him, and keep His commandments. "This," says St. John, "is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another as He gave us commandment." If then we would possess Christ, we must just open our hearts to receive Him. Christ would come and fill our hearts. But they must be emptied of self, of the world, of sin. Both cannot exist in the same heart. Light and darkness cannot co-exist. The heart must be emptied of evil, if Christ is to dwell there. This great work He will perform for you. By His cross, by His agony and bloody sweat, He made the full atonement for all your sins. By His omnipotent Spirit He will enable you to see the efficacy of that atonement if you but look to Him: He will come and dwell in your heart for ever.

This is the highest enjoyment of religion, thus consciously to possess Christ. No wonder so many



Christians live without peace or joy. They do not consciously possess Christ. When this is realized it gives that calmness and contentment which the world cannot give. It sometimes even amounts to ecstatic joy. The soul feels consciously—I have discovered the secret of all happiness, Christ in me. I know a secret joy others do not know; and I can ever keep it. Oh, how beautiful is this experience! How independent is such a heart of all externals! Give the choice, which would you sooner have, “poverty and Christ, or riches without Christ?” The soul would immediately say, “Give me Christ, though I have nothing besides.”

This is the secret of what is a wonder to many, how martyrs were sustained in such times of dreadful suffering. It was the overpowering realization they had of the presence of Jesus. They knew they possessed Him. Of nothing were they so sure in the universe as that they had the living Saviour within them. It is the privilege of every one of us to possess Him now in like manner. He lives still to dwell in our hearts. He loves to dwell there. He is standing without, knocking always for admittance. “Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with me.” Open, admit him, and he will bless you indeed.

CHAPTER VI.

OUR PATTERN.

1 PETER II. 21.—“ Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps.”

JOHN XIII. 15.—“ For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.”

1 JOHN II. 6.—“ He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.”

RELIGION may be taught us abstractedly by the enunciation of great truths, theories, and principles; but not only do we find it difficult to comprehend them, but they do not make so vivid an impression upon us as when we see them exhibited and embodied in the life of an individual. God has therefore, in His mercy, not merely taught us the abstract truth—*holiness*, but has exhibited it in the life of His Son Jesus Christ. The desire of the heart after a model, an ideal, a pattern, is met in Christ. No trial can come upon us, but came upon Him.

We can turn to His life and learn from Him how to comport ourselves under it. No duties can we be called upon to perform so arduous or difficult as those which Christ performed. No sufferings so great as those which He endured. This is one great purpose for which His life is recorded to be an example to us that we should follow His steps.

Christ is the pattern given us by the Father, and He says—"If any man saith he abideth in Him he ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked."

In this world we are all of us often called to self-sacrifice and self-denial. There is no relation of life, no profession or pursuit, but what makes this demand. The mother must deny herself for her child. We all have to sacrifice self for the good of others. Do you feel this difficult, trying? Look to the example of Jesus. All through His life He pleased not Himself. His whole course was characterized by self-sacrifice. He invites you to follow Him in this. He will enable you to do so.

Are you called upon to suffer reproaches wrongfully; to have injuries heaped upon you which you never deserved; to be calumniated, misrepresented, maligned? See in the life of Jesus how to comport yourself under such circumstances. "When He was reviled, He reviled not again: when He suffered, He threatened not: but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously."

Have you had some dearly cherished earthly object taken from you, so that your heart is ready to murmur and rebel, or are you called upon to bear some cross, so that you feel you need resignation? Then behold Jesus in Gethsemane. His prayer is—"Not my will, but thine be done." By His sympathy and presence He will enable you in like manner to subordinate your will to God's.

Jesus is also an example to us of *active qualities*. Behold His deep sympathy with distress. He weeps at the tomb of Lazarus. He comforts the heart of the widow of Nain by restoring her son. He again weeps over the obdurate Jews. How does this reveal the tenderness of His nature, the love of His heart. We must imitate Him in this. Recall His immaculate spotless life. He never sinned; no evil passion ever found a lodgment in His heart; no sinful thought was ever harboured there; no angry sinful feeling found a place in Him; no angry word ever escaped from His lips. He is our perfect example in this, that we should follow in His steps. Think of His active benevolence and usefulness; He sought out cases of need. He carried the bread and the water of life to the hungry and thirsty; He told of rest to the weary. So careful of others, He yet neglected Himself, and forgot to take bread, so that His relatives said—"He is beside Himself." And amid all this, think how He sustained Himself

stant prayer, by continual communion with Father. In all these things He is our example. As a standard than this has God set before us ; Jesus we must imitate. But how is this to be accomplished ? How can I bring my imperfect, low life up to this life ? How with such a heart in a world of temptation and sin, can I reproduce the life of Jesus ? We reply first, consider the pattern life. You must be very familiar with the life of Jesus. You must track His every step, listen to His every word. Aim to understand His spirit and to have your mind filled with the thought of Christ as revealed in His word. Pray the Holy Spirit to unfold to you the things of God, especially as they are set forth as your pattern. But in vain may you consider Jesus in relation, and try to become like Him, unless you also believe in His desire and willingness that you should become like Him, and in His readiness by His indwelling and presence to enable you to arrive at this standard. Christ must be received within and allowed to rule in the heart, to regulate thoughts, feelings, and affections. You must love Him as your present friend ; you must derive from Him all your strength, and, as you make spiritual advances, the praise must all be given to Him. In Jesus, entire absolute dependence upon Him alone, will enable you in any measure to imi-

tate Him. He will enable you if only you will permit Him. He loves to see His own life reproduced in His followers and in His dear children and brethren. This is the joy of His heart. He will first, if you look to Him, cleanse you from all sin. He will then keep you from sin, and yet further, by His constant indwelling and communion with you. He will lead you into the higher walks of holiness. Who can tell the blessedness of such a life? It adorns every station; it raises the poorest; it enriches the noblest. Silently and gently an unconscious influence for good is exerted upon all with whom you come in contact. The influence of holy life is the most powerful and unanswerable argument in support of our holy religion.

Dear reader, say which life will you prefer, a life of grovelling sin, degrading your nature, your being your destiny, and bringing with it all its miserable results here and hereafter, or a life of calm holiness and peace of elevated spirituality, calling your highest and noblest powers into action and enjoyment? As a Christian, which will you choose to have; no higher standard than others around you and so but little enjoyment from religion, or to take the standard God gives you in His word, and press eagerly all your powers towards the attainment of the spirit, the life, the likeness of Jesus?

The choice is before you. Which shall it be

Will you manfully take up your cross and follow Jesus, or idly pass along the stream of time, heedless of your frame, your spirit, your influence, and the great object of your life? Oh, for the former choice, the imitation of Christ! Nothing less than this. May the day soon dawn when, amid the intemperance of some, the sensuality, the scepticism, the indifference of others, thousands upon thousands may have their hearts deeply set upon this great object.

Dear reader, whatever others may do, let this be your resolve,—I will take Jesus for my pattern.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ROCK, OR FOUNDATION.

1 COR. III. 11.—“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

PSALM LXI. 2.—“Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.”

ISAIAH XVIII. 16.—“Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.”

AMID the varied theological controversies and disputes of the times, the soul feels its need of a solid foundation, on which to build for time and eternity. This life, with its hopes and its fears, its doubts and its joys, its troublous present and perilous future, needs a solid basis or foundation on which to rest. All the attempts of man to make such a foundation in the past have ended in failure. Atheism,

morality, intellectual culture, refinement, and various religions of man's invention have all been tried in vain. But God meets the whole human family, and says, "Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation." He only could do it. "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." This is the most *suitable* foundation; not a mere dogma, but Christ Himself, a divine, a living person. We are to rest upon Him. If we are sure of nothing within us and around us; if we have doubts about life and the world and creation, we can have none about *Him*. If our faith in everything else is shaken, yet our faith in the God-man Christ Jesus, in all He is, in all He taught, standeth sure. "Heaven and earth may pass away, but not one jot or tittle of His Word can fail." This foundation is as *firm* and *solid* as eternity. This rock centres in the very throne of God. Christ is not merely the foundation of the Church, or of the Christian faith, but of my belief; of my individual life; of my thoughts, words, and acts. With the utmost confidence I can rely upon Him. I can have the greatest complacency and delight in all His words and promises and assurances of safety. If He says I am forgiven, I want nothing more than His word. If He promises unspeakable blessings, of which I

am utterly unworthy, I yet know that I shall have them; for has He not promised?

If we really thus build upon Christ now, there will be no room for doubt. But we must rest upon Him as the foundation, just as surely as the house or building rests upon its proper foundation. Nothing must come between the soul and Christ.

Ah, it is easy enough to embrace this opinion, and say, "Christ is our foundation;" but to make it a truth in our experience, and really to build upon Christ, is not such an easy matter. To know Him thus in this relation affects all others. If we are not resting wholly upon Him, however near we may be to Him, we are but building upon the sands, and when the winds blow and the floods arise, and the rains descend, great will be the fall. But if we are really resting upon Christ, weak we may be in ourselves, sinful, erring, unable to think a good thought; but all will be well. The floods of sorrow may come; the winds of temptation may blow; the rains of wrath may descend, but we shall remain in safety, because we are upon the rock Christ Jesus. In ages past He has been tried as the foundation of His people. He never failed to support, in the most trying scenes, any who ever came to Him. All men are invited to build upon Him, whatever be their clime, colour, or degree. None are forbidden to rest upon Him.

Dear reader, how important the inquiry, Are we resting wholly upon Christ? Do your views of life, of men, and of truth, spring from Him? Do your hopes of eternity rest upon Him wholly? Are we so resting upon Christ, that though all the world should be against you, you still would follow Him? The danger here is not so much that you would make a wrong choice, as that you should be deceived. You would not dare to say, I prefer the rock or that as a foundation rather than Christ; but you might say, "Christ is my foundation," when you are not building upon Him. Some come very near the rock by profession, and think that is enough. Others speak well of Christ, and are so influenced by Him as to be very careful how they build, or how they regulate their lives, and yet they are not really upon the rock. Who does see that, however near they may come, it will avail nothing unless they are upon the rock Christ Jesus?

And if we are upon this rock "let every man heed how he buildeth thereupon." Christians erect very different structures upon this foundation. Different materials are spread out before us to choose and use: "the gold, the silver, the precious stones, the wood, the hay, the stubble." What we have built will be subjected to the severest trial. The good will remain. "He shall receive a

reward." The evil will be burned. "He shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire." Our building our life is of importance; but still more important than all is the foundation of that life. The building may be fair, and seemly, and beautiful; its design perfection; its architecture unequalled; but if the foundation be unsafe its beauty will not save it from falling. So your life may be excellent, amiable, benevolent—the admiration of men; but if not founded upon Christ it cannot stand before God; "for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

CHAPTER VIII.

OUR STRENGTH.

ISAIAH XLV. 24.—“In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.”

ISAIAH XXVII. 5.—“Or let him take hold of my strength.”

PSALM XVIII. 1.—“I will love thee, O Lord, my strength.”

IF we were told of some invisible being who would come to us when we wished, and who was omnipotent and willing to exert his power for us and for our good, we should be inclined to think it fabulous; and yet with the Christian this is no fable, but a reality. The living Christ is that being; He is the present strength of His people; and this in no figurative sense, but actually and really so.

To know Christ as our strength; to receive Him; to avail ourselves of Him as our strength is the joy of the Christian.

Let us not mistake this strength. Let us not refine it away as a principle or as something inde-

finable which Christ puts within us. This strength is the living Saviour Himself in us by His Spirit.

St. Paul writing to the Colossians says, "Christ in you." The Saviour Himself says, "I in them." (John xvii. 26.) By His own indwelling, by His habitation of our souls as the presiding, animating spirit, He gives us strength.

Samson retained his might while he looked to the Lord as his strength; but when he looked to himself, and the Spirit of God left him, his strength became weakness; and yet when he again looked to God his strength returned.

When Peter realized the Saviour as his strength he was bold indeed. He could face the Jewish rulers, and tell them plainly of their sin. He was ready to go to prison, and to die with the Lord Jesus. But before this his own strength was shown to consist in nothing but idle vauntings.

St. Paul triumphantly exclaimed, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me!" It is the utterance of one who had discovered a grand secret: the secret of *entire reliance* on Jesus as his strength. Once he did not know this. He passed through severe trial to learn it. He must experience sufferings, perils, weariness, painfulness the thorn in the flesh; the messenger of Satan must buffet him; for Christ's strength is made perfect in weakness. Then he exclaims, "Most gladly

therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake : for when I am weak then am I strong." If we would know Christ as our strength, we must pass through this trying ordeal. We must renounce self. We must acknowledge before God we are perfect weakness. We must so glory in our infirmity that the power of Christ may rest upon us. For when conscious of our weakness we are led to Christ, and then we are strong.

Reader, have you never felt your weakness, your need of a power without and beyond yourself? In your inward struggling with sin, in your attempts to be good and holy, in your efforts to perform your duty to God and man, have you never felt how utterly vain are your endeavours, how weak you are for the performance of any good thing? Is it not then joy to you to know Christ the living Saviour dwelling in you as your strength, enabling you for the performance of all these? Perhaps Christ, and not an abstract principle, as your strength, may come with the force of a new truth to you. You see some one to rest upon and to look to in an omnipotent Saviour, who stilled the noise of winds and waves, and burst the bars of the tomb. If so, lay actively hold of Jesus. God has

“laid help upon one that is mighty.” He “mighty to save.” He is both able and willing to be your strength. Your strength for and in every trial, duty, and weakness. And you, even you weak as you are, often as you have failed, will assuredly find to your intense satisfaction and joy you can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth you. You can assuage your sorrow for Christ is your strength. Then you need not say, “I cannot pray;” for he will give you the spirit of prayer; nor that you cannot repent, or feel, or love, because, being present, He will enable you; or that you have no hope or pleasure in your duties for Christ, because with Christ as your strength you can and will have all. What conquests are there you cannot then achieve? Sin and Satan can be overcome; temptation successfully resisted; duties discharged; afflictions borne the future robbed of its fears and lighted with hope, because He is and will be your everlasting strength. “He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might, He increaseth strength; even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall wait and not faint.”

CHAPTER IX.

ONE WITH US.

JOHN XVII. 21.—“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”

1 COR. VI. 17.—“He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.”

EPH. V. 30.—“For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.”

It is a blessed thing to hear of Christ as a Saviour. It is still more blessed to know Him and to believe in Him. To know Him as a Saviour from the wrath of God, or in any of His high relations which He sustains to His people, is well. But to know Him so as to be *one* with Him, so as to be united to Him by faith in the high, deep sense these passages unfold, is the highest attainment and privilege we can enjoy. It was the deep yearning of the Saviour's heart that His people should be brought to enjoy

this state of privilege. Hence we find it was the subject matter of that fervent prayer He uttered before His death, in John xvii., that all who believe might be one in Him.

And because He knew how impossible it was that such sinful creatures should possess the qualities necessary for this union, He determined to provide all that was necessary to raise them to such a state of privilege and enjoyment. For this purpose He became *one* with us when He took our nature upon Him. "The word was made flesh." He became the Son of man. As the Son of man He became one with us in our sorrows, sufferings, and sins: "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses."

It is His language as contemplating the sins of His people, which He has taken upon Himself: "Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me so that I am not able to look up." (Psalm xl. 12.) So also He was one with us in that He bore the penalty of sin—death.

In this way he made an atonement for all our misdoings, and prepared the way for our being made one with Him. But further to accomplish this great object of His heart, He declares to His Father, "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them." Here is the climax. This is the fulness every believer is entitled to possess. The

glory of Jesus He has given to His people. The glory of His acceptance with the Father. The same unbounded freedom is ours. The glory of His place and position. "He hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Eph. ii. 6.) The glory of His spotless righteousness: "He was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." The glorious peace He has, because He said, "My peace give I unto you."

To know and believe this truth is the foundation of all the comfort, joy, confidence, and usefulness of the Christian. By simple faith we receive from Jesus all that we need as requisite to the enjoyment of this oneness or union with Him. We then become one with Him in spirit; in tender affection for souls and for our fellow men; in hatred of sin; in love of holiness; in desire to benefit others; in the spirit of self-sacrifice for the good of others. We have the same mind in us which was also in Christ Jesus, "who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. ii. 6—8.)

If thus united to Him, how great will be His love

for you ; you are as He is in this world. (1 John iv. 17.) You are as part of Himself,—a member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. He will ever take care of you, and will say to the powers of darkness, “Touch not mine anointed.” He looks upon any harm done to you as done to Himself. Hence when Saul was persecuting even unto death the members of Christ at Damascus, Jesus met Him and said, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *me* ?” And if thus united to Him, how great will be your love, your obedience ! No sacrifice will be too great to make for His glory ; no duty too arduous to undertake for Him ; no commandment grievous, but joyous. How constant too will be your communion with Him. If you are one, will you not refer all things to Him ? Will not your first thoughts rise to Him ? Will not your only desire be to please Him ? Will it not be your constant aim to secure His approbation, to walk in the sunshine of His smile ? But you ask for whom is this privilege prepared, and how can it be realized and enjoyed ? It is prepared for all who will accept it, and can be received by simple faith. Jesus prayed that all who believe in Him may be one in Him. This prayer was answered. This privilege is accorded to all who believe.

Beloved, have you risen to the height of this privilege ? Are you living in the conscious enjoy-

ment of your oneness with Jesus? If not, let me beseech you even now to arrive at it. Renounce all that is opposed to His will. Yield yourself wholly unto God a living sacrifice. Is it nothing to induce you to this course that you will be exalted to a state of union, of oneness with Jesus. Sin, temptation, death, the powers of darkness, cannot disturb or sever this union, because you can say with the Apostle St. Paul, "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. viii. 38—39.)

CHAPTER X.

THE TRUE VINE.

JOHN XV. 1.—“I am the true vine.”

ISAIAH LIII. 2.—“He shall grow up before him as a tender plant.”

ALL Christians are familiar with the beautiful chapter in which Christ sets forth this relation He sustains to His people, “the true vine.” We are indeed so familiar with it that we are apt to pass it by as though we knew all about it. Our very familiarity seems to detract from its interest and meaning. But if it is lacking in interest and meaning to us, our familiarity with it does not make it so; but rather is it that we are not enough acquainted with the deep spiritual truth it contains. The Holy Spirit alone can unfold to us all that is implied by this relation, Christ as the true vine and His people as the branches. The great truth that

: sets forth, the close living union between Christ and His people, is apparent to all.

Jesus, as the vine, is the centre and source of all our spiritual nourishment and life. His people, as the branches, are as really dependent upon Him as are the branches upon the vine. The intimacy, the union between Christ and His people must be as close. We must just as really receive from Him constant spiritual support and nourishment as the branch does from the vine. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered." Our spiritual life we must continually derive fresh from Christ. Just as certainly as every shoot and tendril of the vine derives all from the root, so must the Christian draw all his sustenance from Christ. Just as the branches are dependent upon the roots, so is the Christian upon Christ. He will not attempt to rise to God without the help of the Saviour; nor to pray, nor to read His Word, nor to do any good work. "Without me, ye can do nothing."

How blessed is this union with Jesus! It is a union of *friendship*: "Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends." There is the most blessed communion as of friends. There is a reciprocal love—"Continue ye in my love." A calm resting each in the assured love of the other. And this will lead most surely on our part to obedience.

"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide my love," *i.e.*, in the assured realization of This is the union to which we are invited wh Jesus says, "Abide in me." In all your vari frames and feelings; in your times of ecstasy a depression; in sorrow and in joy; in active dut in the business of life, when the world's ca depress you, as well as in moments of leisure, st "abide in me." "Abide in me prayerful humbly, dependently, joyfully, and obediently "Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear mu fruit, so shall ye be my disciples." "He th abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringe forth much fruit." If you will only abide thus Jesus you certainly will bring forth much fru The fruit will be experienced in your own so You will grow in grace and in the knowledge our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. You will n know the upbraidings of a guilty conscience. Jes by His presence will assure your heart of His lov and you will rest in Him with peace and joy u speakable. You will be really of use to yo fellow men, from deep sympathy towards them from an intense desire that they should know as y do this precious Saviour; you will noiselessly b surely pursue a course that will benefit and ble all who come within the sphere of your influence

But, since all turns upon abiding in Jesus an

having this union with Him, you ask, How can I abide in Jesus? We cannot over-estimate the importance of this question. The answer is, you can only abide in Him by constantly cleaving to Him by *faith*, knowing all that faith includes:—giving up yourself,—your thoughts,—affections,—will, wholly to Him, and receiving Him just as He is revealed, as your substitute, righteousness, your all in all; letting this faith be in continual exercise; acting by prayer; working by love. When you lie down, and when you rise up, and when you walk by the way, you must seek thus to abide in Him. “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him,” *i.e.*, As you received Him at the first by faith, so continue to realize him now. Look constantly to Him. This is neither impossible nor absurd, but both Scriptural and possible. We are to be looking unto Jesus all through our Christian course. Just as the eye is always looking at some object, so the mind can always be employed in looking upon Jesus, and must be so employed if we are to be fruitful branches of the true vine.

You say, I know this quite well; but how is it possible in this world to do so? It is only possible as we again look to Jesus to enable us. The command He gives to us, “Abide in me,” we can only breathe back again to Him, as did the disciples at

Emmaus, "Abide with us." He is infinitely more willing to abide with us than we are that should. When shall we believe this? He will never leave us were it not that we drive Him away by our neglect or our sin, or by not exercising faith in Him.

If we cut ourselves off from the fountain of life, can we complain if we wither? If we go into darkness, can we justly murmur against the darkness? But though we have gone thus away from Him, His love is the same; His hand is stretched out still; His hand of invitation to return; of His to dispense His blessings of pardon and peace. Though we are dead, He will revive us. He is the true vine. He delights to behold the branches increase and appear fruitful. He will withhold supplies that may tend to this purpose, but He will come Himself to be as the root and stem to the branches, His people.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BRIDEGROOM.

1 COR. VI. 17.—“He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.”

ROM. VII. 4.—“That ye should be married to another, even to Christ, who is raised from the dead.”

ISAIAH LIV. 5.—“Thy maker is thy husband.”

THIS relation of bridegroom which Christ sustains to His people is no mere figure of speech. It exhibits the intimate union and communion which should subsist between the soul and Christ. All true marriage is the union of heart and soul. A union of mental and moral sympathy. All true marriage is only typical of the union between the soul and Christ. It is so employed by the writers both of the Old and New Testament. Jesus Himself so employs it in the parable of the Marriage of the King's Son. (Matt. xxii.) Nothing can so fully and beautifully set forth the union of the soul

with God as this. St. Paul refers to it as the great mystery. The seventh and eighth chapters of the Romans furnish us with a contrast between the union of the soul with the law and with Christ. "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; *that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead.*" The one marriage of the soul to the law is described in the following verses. The soul is baffled, defeated, overcome in its efforts to please and obey its husband. Death is the penalty of its disobedience. Christ dies as the sinner's substitute, and convinces the soul thus of His intense love. He gains the heart; the soul is at liberty to be married to Him. The eighth chapter describes the blessed results of this true union. There is now perfect oneness and sympathy. Christ has taken away sin, so that there is now no

condemnation. He was made man that He might have perfect sympathy. He raises the soul to a position of oneness with Himself.

By His atonement the soul is purged from all sin, and finds acceptance with God; and is meetened for fellowship with Himself and with holy angels. His own righteousness the soul appropriates and is clothed with. His own peace and glory the soul accepts. Offering these benefits and blessings the Saviour has purchased the soul; has convinced it of His love—has won that love. The covenant entered into at baptism is confirmed, and the heart's affections are yielded up to Him. Then comes the blessed experience of the eighth chapter. No condemnation; a freedom from the law of sin and death; spiritual mindedness, which is life and peace; the privileges of son and heirship; the glorious liberty of the children of God; the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; the consciousness of His guidance in all the events of life for our good (ver. 28); conformity to Christ's image; the being called, justified, glorified; the gift of all things to us; the freedom from all possible condemnation; the inseparable and everlasting union of the soul with Christ (vers. 38, 39). "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." This oneness, this equality, sympathy, and communion, are what Christ intends when He presents Himself to us in this relation. It

is not for us to question it, but to accept with reverential love all it includes; to enter at once into this blessed relation with the living Saviour to know Him thus; to have continual communion with Him as the bridegroom of the soul. He pleased to exalt you to this high position of equality with Himself, of oneness, of union of heart and soul. It is yours gratefully to accept it. Unworthy you are, and ever will be, but your worthiness is found in Him. With the utmost tenderness He will bear with your failings; He knew their utmost extent before He came to you. He requires of you perfect trust, perfect love, perfect obedience. It is not servitude, nor bondage: it is love.

Dear reader, do you know Christ in this relation? Do you know the blessedness of communion with Him as the bridegroom of your soul? He has been wooing you. He has proved the reality and intensity of His love for you by dying on your behalf. Again and again has He come to you to reveal Himself thus to your soul. Have you turned away from you? Have you kept Him standing with at the door? If so, be guilty no longer of such folly, such sin. The rejection of Him in this relation is fraught with the most tremendous consequences conceivable. Not only do you lose that He is capable of being to you, all He would give you, but you are left to reap the bitter fruit

all your folly and sin. You are left to realize the bitterness of that eternal separation and isolation of the soul, which no created thing or power can supply. Married only to the law, your experience will be only and always that of the seventh of Romans: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" But if you will enter into this union with the personal living Saviour; if you will make this everlasting covenant with Him; if you will yield yourself up to Him and accept Him as your spiritual husband and head, all will be well. The blessedness of this union no tongue can tell. From all evil, its bitterness and curse, Jesus will deliver you. Every blessing you can desire He will give you. It is a small matter even to say these things, great as they are, because of the truth that is greater than all, that He Himself will ever be to you as the husband of your soul; holding communion with you; guiding you; caring for you; blessing you with His own presence, and all that presence brings, for ever and ever.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SHEPHERD.

JOHN x. 14.—“I am the Good Shepherd and know my sheep, and am known of mine.”

EZEKIEL xxxiv. 23.—“And I will set up one shepherd over them, and He shall feed them, and shall be their shepherd.”

HEBREWS xiii. 20.—“Our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep.”

It has often been remarked that we in this country can form but little conception of the tenderness that existed in the East between the shepherd and the sheep, or of all that was involved in the character of the shepherd. Some notion, however imperfect, of what it was, may be gathered from the fact that Christ Himself, when probably witnessing the scene of the shepherd caring for his sheep, tending them in the rich pasture land, stood forth and said, “I am the Good Shepherd.” These

words are as true in their application to us now as they were to the people to whom they were spoken. It is for us to endeavour to apprehend in our experience the spiritual meaning of this relation of Christ to His people.

There is an infinity of comfort in this revelation of Christ to us, and it is suited to many of our deepest necessities. We need a spiritual shepherd. Nothing can so truly set forth our spiritual condition as sheep in Eastern lands. Like them we are weak and unable to help ourselves. We are so foolish as ever to incline to wander. On all sides we are exposed to the attack of foes. Who has not realized the truth of this? It is under such circumstances Jesus reveals Himself to us as the Good Shepherd. Happy is that Christian who is taught by the Holy Spirit to understand all that is involved in this relation.

As the Shepherd Jesus *owns His sheep*. He has not only created them, but dearly purchased them at the price of His own blood. He is interested in their condition. He knows their names. They are very dear to Him. He knows their hearts. He is acquainted with every thought and feeling; and, though He knows their unworthiness, He calls them His own sheep, and loves them as such. He is continually watching over them. They are indebted to Him for deliverance from many an

unseen and unknown danger. He is ever supplying their necessities. He leads them beside the still waters.

Jesus says, "*I know my sheep.*" "The Lord knoweth them that are His." "Whom He did fore-know He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His son. From all eternity He knew His sheep. He knows them now, so as to bless, preserve, and honour them. He distinguishes them from others. He knows them most intimately. He has searched them through and through. Their heart of hearts is open to Him. Oh, humbling thought! He knows my inmost weaknesses and failings—my secret sins, and all the hidden motives of my life. And yet, knowing all about me, He loves me; He is willing to shepherd me. My necessities and wants He will supply. But this is a reciprocal acquaintance. Christ not only says, "I am the Good Shepherd, and know my sheep;" He adds, "*I am known of mine.*" What is this but saying, "I am spiritually apprehended by my people in this relationship. They know me as having tender love for them; they know me as present, guiding them; they know me as leading them, as feeding them; they know my voice." That voice may speak in a storm—in affliction, but we shall recognise it as the voice of Jesus. We should know Him so as to follow Him wherever He leads.

We should wait upon Him just as sheep do upon their shepherd. We should feel ourselves lost without Him. Every moment we should be asking, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do and be?" We should then be willing to give up our own will and follow His; to obey Him in all things.

It is not enough to acknowledge Christ as a Shepherd, or to say we know He is the Shepherd of His people. We want to confide in Him in this relation. We want to make it a reality in our experience that He is our Shepherd. We want to know all the confidence which a full realization of Christ in this blessed relationship will bring us—that sense of trust and calm repose in Him. In every hour of trial and danger we want to run to Him, and to experience that He really does shepherd us. In every time of real difficulty we want such a view of the power and ability of Jesus to help us, that we shall really go immediately to Him for help and deliverance, and shall feel and know that we have it. David evidently must have been taught this by the Holy Spirit, when He said, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." This is the privilege of all God's people now, to experience the tenderness, the protecting care, the love of Jesus as a shepherd. It is no mere figure of speech when Jesus says, "I am the Good Shepherd." He does really shepherd thus all who permit Him. He has

laid down His life for His sheep, His shepherd you. This He now does. He is willing to accomplish His purpose away from Him? Do you run up to Him, or to enter His presence, to follow Him? Will you turn away from His voice? Ah, then it is a sad day, you will be separated from the Shepherd for ever. You must be placed in the place of the cursed, and hear the awful sentence, "ye cursed." But if His sheep are welcome, "Come, ye blessed of the kingdom prepared for you, the inheritance of the world."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE RESTORER.

PSALM XXIII. 3.—“ He restoreth my soul : He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.”

HOSEA XIV. 4.—“ I will heal their backsliding.”

A SAD experience in our Christian life is our tendency to wander from God. We all feel this. Sometimes we are made mournfully conscious of it when we have long been estranged from Him. Few things are more painful than this state of heart. Religious duty is irksome, and the world does not possess attractions enough for the mind that has been spiritually enlightened. This state is often very much aggravated by the painful and unsuccessful efforts that are made to regain the former position and to reproduce former joys. The struggle is often of a fearful character ; means are had recourse to in vain. The soul is sometimes led

laid down His life for His sheep. And yet He shepherd you. This He now lives to accomplish. He is willing to accomplish it. Will you turn away from Him? Do you refuse to yield yourself up to Him, or to enter His fold? Will you not follow Him? Will you turn away a deaf ear to His voice? Ah, then it is a fearful thought! You will be separated from the Shepherd and His sheep for ever. You must be placed at His left hand and hear the awful sentence, "Depart from me, ye cursed." But if His sheep you will hear welcome, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, in the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world."

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to the borders of despair. How truly lamentable is the condition of such an one! His heart is hardened; he cannot pray. Conscious of much opposition to the Spirit of God, the temptations of Satan are often listened to, that the unpardonable sin may have been committed. His remorse is increased by the remembrance of joys once experienced but now lost. What will meet such a case? Nothing but the Scriptural presentation of the Saviour as the Restorer of the soul. Or what will meet the case of the frequent backslidings of God's children? What will deliver them from the sense of self-degradation and shame and self-reproach they suffer as the consequence of their wanderings? Or, more important still, in what way can they really be restored? There is only one answer to these questions. The living Saviour is the Restorer of His people. Christ is revealed in this very relation to meet this exigency. God knew that even His own people, like sheep, would go astray. Whenever we are conscious of wandering, and desire to return, we should look to Jesus and believe in Him as able and willing to restore us, and He will restore us. To know Him in this relation is to see how real and true and deep are His sympathy and love for us. He does not turn away from us when we go astray from Him. You are none the less His sheep, though you may have

wandered. All is darkness in your heart; and no wonder, for you have gone astray from the light. But the Restorer, whose special work it is to bring you back, is watching you. He was grieved at your departure. He has tracked your steps to bring you back again. The desire in your heart to return He has begotten, and He is now round about you, waiting your return. The very darkness and misery you experience are intended to lead you back to Him. He has been following you with the gentle monitions of His Spirit. He speaks to you now, and says, "Return unto me: I will heal your backslidings, I will receive you graciously, and love you freely."

This is His language addressed to you now, no matter how often or how far you may have wandered. He is still waiting and willing to receive you. Not more earnestly or sincerely did the Eastern shepherd follow the wandering sheep through ravines and dells and thorny paths than does Jesus follow you; not so tenderly or lovingly did the shepherd carry home on his shoulders the footsore, weary wanderer, than would Jesus bear you, if you would but commit yourself unto Him. This is all He requires; but this you must do: it is the very condition of restoration, it is the only way it can be effected. You have foolishly imagined you could of yourself retrace your steps, or that,

CHAPTER XIV.

THE KEEPER.

1 PETER I. 5.—“ Who are kept by the power of God.”

2 TIM. I. 12.—“ For I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.”

PSALM CXXI. 5.—“ The Lord is thy keeper.”

FEW things distress the Christian more than the thought which sometimes enters the heart—Shall I really be kept unto life everlasting? Will sin ever regain dominion over me? Shall I always have this assurance of God's pardon and love? This thought is sometimes varied and presented to the mind in different forms, and causes great anxiety.

We want then to know Christ in this relationship—as the Keeper of His people. He says, “I know my sheep, and I will give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish.” We find Him

declaring, in prayer to His Father, that He had acted as the Keeper of His own disciples,—“While I was with them in the world *I kept them* in thy name: those that thou gavest me *I have kept*, and none of them is lost.” We cannot doubt but that He is still the same Keeper of His people. “The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.”

That which causes us this fear and distress is our own experience of past failure in our attempts to be holy and to obey God. Who is there who has not been made painfully conscious of his weakness by repeated failure? Let broken resolutions speak; let your present low attainments and your state before God bear witness. But is it always to be so? Is there no relief? Yes, oh yes, there is. It is nigh you, but you have overlooked it; it is offered you, but you have turned away from it; it is known to you, and yet not employed by you. Familiar with the fact of a Saviour and of His life you may be; but if you know Him not as the Saviour who is able, not only to quell every rising fear in your heart, but as able also to preserve you from sin unto life everlasting, you really know Him yet but to little purpose. For this very end He is revealed to His people as their Keeper. We can only be kept, as we are looking to and depending upon Him. We cannot keep ourselves.

Dependence is our might. When passion rises it is not for us to philosophize about its evils, but to rise to the highest motive power to subdue it; to look off from passion to the living Saviour. If we stop to reason about it, we parley with the tempter, and are lost; but if we look to Jesus with the look that says, "Lord, I perish unless thou dost save me; I am weak; I cannot help myself; Lord, help me," Jesus can and will keep you from it. When tempted to neglect duty—some private devotion, communion with Jesus, or some active work for Him—remember only Jesus can keep you in the path of duty; and even He can only keep you as you really, and from the heart, trust Him and look to Him only as your Keeper. There is often a mingling of self and Christ in this, which, as in efforts for our own salvation, defeats its own end. A little of self and a little of Christ will not save us; self must be wholly given up; Christ must be all. We can never succeed if we say, "I will do all I can, and I will look to the Lord to help me." Should we not rather say, "The Lord shall be my Keeper; I will look to *Him only and wholly* as my Preserver?" This is the first, the second, and the last step to preservation, and when Christ is received into the heart in this relation you can go forth and battle manfully.

The mistake St. Peter made when he went to

our blessed Lord, walking upon the water, was this : he found he could walk ; he gained self-confidence ; he looked away from Jesus—it was but for a moment, but it was enough ; his own strength, he found, was weakness ; when he beheld the waves, he began to sink. Here was a little of his own strength and a little of Christ's ; but it would not do.

Hard as it may seem, the great lesson we all have to learn is wholly to lose sight of self in God. This is the most difficult lesson of our lives ; it is as though God told us to stand upon the surface of the ocean, saying, "By my power you can stand there ; look to me, and I will keep you from sinking, but immediately you forget the power by which you stand you will assuredly sink." God has brought us into an extraordinary state of salvation by Christ. His power alone has brought us into it ; His power alone can preserve us. Need we wonder that we fall when we forget Him ? By the power of God we are kept ; and yet we act as though it were by our own power. The heart must have no trust whatever in itself ; there must be no confidence in the flesh ; Jesus must be received as the Keeper of the heart and life ; all must be referred to Him ; all must be given up to Him ; and if He keeps us now in this life we may be sure He will keep us through eternity and He will keep us. While we depend

laid down His life for His sheep. And yet shepherd you. This He now lives to accomplish it. Will you turn away from Him? Do you refuse to yield up to Him, or to enter His fold? Will you not follow Him? Will you turn away a deaf ear to His voice? Ah, then it is a fearful thought that you will be separated from the Shepherd and His flock for ever. You must be placed at His left hand and hear the awful sentence, "Depart from Me, ye cursed." But if His sheep you will be welcome, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, for the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world."

CHAPTER XV.

OUR PEACE.

JOHN XIV. 27.—“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.”

EPH. II. 14.—“He is our peace.”

ISAIAH IX. 6.—“The Prince of Peace.”

IF anything is plain in the Holy Scriptures, it is that the Christian religion is a religion of peace. Our God is the God of peace; our Saviour is the Prince of Peace.

A peace that passeth all understanding, which the world cannot give or take away, a joy unspeakable, is the great blessing of every Christian. “He shall enter into *peace*,” is especially and emphatically the blessing attendant upon believing. “We which have believed do enter into *rest*.”

When looking to Christ there is peace from the pangs and upbraidings of a guilty conscience; the heart is at rest when the blood of Jesus is sprinkled upon it. There is peace now in the contemplation of an offended God, a trampled law, a severe justice. The work the Saviour has accomplished is a perfect

to the borders of despair. How truly lamentable is the condition of such an one! His heart is hardened; he cannot pray. Conscious of much opposition to the Spirit of God, the temptations of Satan are often listened to, that the unpardonable sin may have been committed. His remorse is increased by the remembrance of joys once experienced but now lost. What will meet such a case? Nothing but the Scriptural presentation of the Saviour as the Restorer of the soul. Or what will meet the case of the frequent backslidings of God's children? What will deliver them from the sense of self-degradation and shame and self-reproach they suffer as the consequence of their wanderings? Or, more important still, in what way can they really be restored? There is only one answer to these questions. The living Saviour is the Restorer of His people. Christ is revealed in this very relation to meet this exigency. God knew that even His own people, like sheep, would go astray. Whenever we are conscious of wandering, and desire to return, we should look to Jesus, and believe in Him as able and willing to restore us, and He will restore us. To know Him in this relation is to see how real and true and deep are His sympathy and love for us. He does not turn away from us when we go astray from Him. *You are none the less His sheep, though you may have*

wandered. All is darkness in your heart ; and no wonder, for you have gone astray from the light. But the Restorer, whose special work it is to bring you back, is watching you. He was grieved at your departure. He has tracked your steps to bring you back again. The desire in your heart to return He has begotten, and He is now round about you, waiting your return. The very darkness and misery you experience are intended to lead you back to Him. He has been following you with the gentle monitions of His Spirit. He speaks to you now, and says, "Return unto me : I will heal your backslidings, I will receive you graciously, and love you freely."

This is His language addressed to you now, no matter how often or how far you may have wandered. He is still waiting and willing to receive you. Not more earnestly or sincerely did the Eastern shepherd follow the wandering sheep through ravines and dells and thorny paths than does Jesus follow you ; not so tenderly or lovingly did the shepherd carry home on his shoulders the footsore, weary wanderer, than would Jesus bear you, if you would but commit yourself unto Him. This is all He requires ; but this you must do : it is the very condition of restoration, it is the only way it can be effected. You have foolishly imagined you could of yourself retrace your steps, or that,

the enjoyment of everlasting peace. The prophet Isaiah tells us God's intention—"Then had thy peace been as a river." As a river ever increasing in breadth and depth, until it is lost in the mighty ocean. Or as a river that is filled up from the sea of God's own love. As a river that flows steadily onward, notwithstanding all the opposition it may encounter. As a river in its calm and tranquil surface, fitly setting forth the serenity and repose of the soul; and as a river exerting its beneficial influence upon all around.

This is not only God's intention respecting us, but He has made a perfect provision for its accomplishment in the gift of His Son. "He is our peace." Only by looking continually to Him, only by receiving Him can we enjoy it. It is not by looking to self, but by looking to Christ; not by inquiries how I feel, but by remembering what Christ is; not what am I doing, but what Christ has done.

When shall we understand this? When shall we leave for ever all self-righteous efforts to secure peace, and trust to Jesus only? When shall we fully accept this, God's perfect deliverance from fear and every distracting cause, which He has once for all provided for us in Christ, and cease all our efforts to do what it is impossible we ever can do, restore peace to our own souls; and when shall we enter into peace by receiving Jesus as our peace?

CHAPTER XVI.

THE WAY.

JOHN XIV. 6.—“ I am the *Way*.”

HEB. X. 20.—“ A new and living *Way*.”

HEB. IX. 8.—“ The *Way* into the holiest of all.”

THIS relation in which Christ stands to His people may be regarded as an answer to many of the difficult questions that agitate the heart of man. Jesus Himself, as the God-man, is near us now, and answers us all just as He answered the doubting question of Thomas in these divine words—“ I am the way.”

Do you ask, “ How can I become convinced of sin, its enmity, and its evil, and how can I repent ? ” “ I am the way,” is the answer of Jesus. A sight of Him in his spotless holiness, a view of Him by faith as suffering for, and on behalf of sinners, will lead you to exclaim with Job, “ Now mine eye seeth thee I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” Or a view of the glorified Saviour, as in the case of

Saul, will produce the same effect, since "He is exalted a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance to Israel." Do you ask, "How can I obtain forgiveness?" Jesus replies, "I am the way." Him hath God exalted to give "forgiveness of sins." "By Him all that believe are justified from all things." Are you inquiring, "How can I be reconciled to God?" Jesus says, "I am the way." "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them: and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."

Is it your anxious question, How can I overcome sin? Jesus says, "I am the way." "This is the victory that overcometh the world," the world of sin, "even our faith." The next verse shows us the object of that faith. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God."

Are you asking, "*How can I become holy?*" Jesus says, "*I am the way.*" "Christ of God is made unto us sanctification." How can I obtain assurance? Still Christ is the way; believing in Him alone will give it. How can I triumph over death and secure meetness for heaven? Still is it none but Jesus; He only is the way.

Men have tried other ways ; morality, self-righteousness, good works, dependence upon frames and feelings ; but they have tried in vain. When shall we learn to cease all our own efforts, to renounce all self-righteousness, and to receive Christ alone as the way ?

He as the way is consecrated to us by the steps of our fathers ; by the disciples, the prophets, the patriarchs, and by all who are saved. God has placed various sign-posts which meet us in the pathway of life, and direct us to walk in this way. It is our highest privilege and happiness to be found ever walking in it. It is not enough to acknowledge Christ, to profess to know something of Him, to believe in Him, as it is sometimes understood ; a dead faith will not bring these blessings ; there must be an actual and conscious walking in Christ, the way. He is the living way. Why the living way ? There is a deep spiritual meaning hidden in this relation in all the relations of Christ. There is the idea of entire dependence upon Him ; of continually abiding in Him ; of deriving all from Him ; we are unconsciously to walk in Him as in a way. The living Christ is Himself the way. This is often so commented upon and refined as to be explained away of its high and living import. The Holy Spirit alone can reveal to us all that is involved in walking thus consciously in Christ as the way. There is a

humble, calm sense of safety which nothing can ever shake; there is the firm persuasion of being right, which yields continual joy; there is fellowship with the Father and the Son, which is sweeter than all the world can afford. But while we know all this and experience it, even for a short period, our difficulty is to walk *continually* in this way. Satan brings all his energies to bear upon this point, to force us out of the way Christ. He well knows if he can but succeed in alluring us out of the way, if he can only get us to walk in some other way, resembling this, or contiguous to this, that then he can lead us further and further astray.

The world has its ways, that we feel are perfectly lawful to walk in, and so we go in them, and leave Christ. Our own hearts suggest we cannot *always* walk in this way. That it is well sometimes on Sabbaths, at ordinances, and at stated times of devotion, but that we must sometimes leave it, and walk in other ways. This is the cause of our fall. If we saw that we should never leave Christ, never deviate by one footstep from this way; if we directed all our energies and efforts to keep in this way, and all our prayers to the Holy Spirit to keep us in it, how different our life would be. We need not forsake the world to do this; we dare not. Rather should we imitate Him, who when on earth was the most active mover among men. The spirit of our reli-

tion we can carry with us into all we think, or do, or say. But Christ must be the way. Then in the evil hour of temptation you can stand. Christ is the way to resist it.

Reader, have you yourself entered this way? Are you really walking in it? You *enter it* by faith; you *abide in it* by faith; but *the way* itself is the indwelling living Saviour. When you walk in this way, you depend upon Him; you embrace Him; you appropriate Him; you realize Him in your heart and life, as the centre and support of all; you unconsciously rest upon Him as the way.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE TRUTH.

JOHN XVIII. 37.—“To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.”

JOHN XIV. 6.—“I am the truth.”

I JOHN III. 19.—“And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.”

WHEN Christ stood before Pilate, He preached Himself as the Gospel ; He declared that He was a king—that He came to set up a spiritual kingdom. He told him the object of His incarnation, viz., to bear witness to the truth—and even urged Pilate to believe it. “Every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice.” But Pilate only replied by putting the question, “What is truth?” This is often the sneer of the world. Truth—what is truth? as if there were any such thing as sincerity or truth in men’s thoughts, feelings, and conduct. Such men judge others from their own corrupt hearts. But

question—What is truth? may be regarded as a mere inquiry. The heathen, in their various notions, are unconsciously asking this question. The inquiry among us is still earnestly put, What is truth as to religion? Cowper well and beautifully answers, “ ’Twas Pilate’s question put to truth.” Jesus declares, “I am the truth.” His answer on the occasion of Pilate’s question was very significant. It was as much as to say, “Think upon me; look upon me; I am the truth.” Christ Himself as the Divine person—self-existent, unchangeable, is the truth.

Many Christians have, we fear, but a slight apprehension of Christ as the truth. It is often misunderstood in its meaning. To the minds of many it conveys no other idea than that Christ was the teacher of the truth; that He came to reveal truth relative to God, and the way of salva-

He most assuredly did this, but He Himself was, and is the truth, and must be so understood and received by His people. Words are not the truth. Doctrine is not the truth; they may represent the truth, and doctrine is only true and reliable as it represents Christ. But Christ is Himself the essence and the embodiment of truth. When we rightly apprehend this relation, we feel we dare not rest in doctrine, in external worship, in the law; but must rise through them, and by them

and finished work. It is infinitely efficacious ; it is accepted of God ; it has atoned for all the wrong sin has done. When Jesus stood in the place of sinners, it was as if He said, "On me be thy wrath, O my father, but let the sons of men be free." The knowledge and the belief of this truth alone can bring peace to the heart. This is the peace which passeth understanding. It is not merely the peace Christ gives, but the peace He brings. When He takes possession of the heart, He of course brings with Him all that He is.

The expression is remarkable. It is not merely, "Peace I leave with you," but "*My* peace give I unto you," i.e., the peace I enjoy. The Apostle St. Paul speaks of it as "the peace of God"—"Let the peace of God rule in your hearts." The peace of God, the peace which Jesus has, is calm ; it rests upon a solid foundation, and is an eternal peace. We as Christians are privileged to enter into this peace. Do you doubt it ? Does not Jesus say, "*My* peace give I unto you ?" They are His own loving words ; they are as certain of fulfilment as any of His promises, as certain as His own being.

Do you ask "How can I obtain it ? How continue in the enjoyment of it ? How increase it ?" The only reply is, "*He is our peace.*" The Holy Spirit alone can reveal Christ to you in this rela-

tion. If you knew the living Saviour thus, you would find Him the efficient cause of this peace ; you would have Him continually with you, removing every obstruction in the way of its exercise, as it begins to rise. He would chide all disturbing causes ; He would increase its measure ; He would Himself dwell in us as our peace ; and thus the peace of God would effectually rule in our hearts.

This is what as Christians we earnestly desire. Often we long for more peace. We have at times realized and enjoyed this peace. At our early conversion, at the Holy Communion, or at some season of private devotion, when we beheld the Saviour as our substitute, when we had a sight of the cross, then we had peace.

We now inwardly sigh and pant continually after it ; but often we know not how to get it. This is the way. *He* is our peace. It can be restored to us in no other way than that by which we first attained it. Looking only to Jesus as guilty and condemned sinners, we must again receive Him as our peace. But instead of this, when we have peace from believing, so treacherous are our hearts, that we take comfort from that, and so try to gather peace from our own experiences. But this is sure to fail. We cannot live upon the past ; it must be Jesus now, just as it was Jesus at the first.

God, in giving us His Son, has made provision for

the enjoyment of everlasting peace. The prophet Isaiah tells us God's intention—"Then had thy peace been as a river." As a river ever increasing in breadth and depth, until it is lost in the mighty ocean. Or as a river that is filled up from the sea of God's own love. As a river that flows steadily onward, notwithstanding all the opposition it may encounter. As a river in its calm and tranquil surface, fitly setting forth the serenity and repose of the soul; and as a river exerting its beneficial influence upon all around.

This is not only God's intention respecting us, but He has made a perfect provision for its accomplishment in the gift of His Son. "He is our peace." Only by looking continually to Him, only by receiving Him can we enjoy it. It is not by looking to self, but by looking to Christ; not by inquiries how I feel, but by remembering what Christ is; not what am I doing, but what Christ has done.

When shall we understand this? When shall we leave for ever all self-righteous efforts to secure peace, and trust to Jesus only? When shall we fully accept this, God's perfect deliverance from fear and every distracting cause, which He has once for all provided for us in Christ, and cease all our efforts to do what it is impossible we ever can do, restore peace to our own souls; and when shall we enter into peace by receiving Jesus as our peace?

CHAPTER XVI.

THE WAY.

JOHN XIV. 6.—“ I am the *Way*.”

HEB. X. 20.—“ A new and living *Way*.”

HEB. IX. 8.—“ The *Way* into the holiest of all.”

THIS relation in which Christ stands to His people may be regarded as an answer to many of the difficult questions that agitate the heart of man. Jesus Himself, as the God-man, is near us now, and answers us all just as He answered the doubting question of Thomas in these divine words—“ I am the way.”

Do you ask, “ How can I become convinced of sin, and enmity, and its evil, and how can I repent ? ” “ I am the way,” is the answer of Jesus. A sight of Him in his spotless holiness, a view of Him by faith suffering for, and on behalf of sinners, will lead you to exclaim with Job, “ Now mine eye seeth how I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” Or a view of the glorified Saviour, as in the case of

Saul, will produce the same effect, since "He is exalted a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance to Israel." Do you ask, "How can I obtain forgiveness?" Jesus replies, "I am the way." Him hath God exalted to give "forgiveness of sins." "By Him all that believe are justified from all things." Are you inquiring, "How can I be reconciled to God?" Jesus says, "I am the way." "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them: and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."

Is it your anxious question, How can I overcome sin? Jesus says, "I am the way." "This is the victory that overcometh the world," the world of sin, "even our faith." The next verse shows us the object of that faith. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God."

Are you asking, "*How can I become holy?*" Jesus says, "*I am the way.*" "Christ of God is made unto us sanctification." How can I obtain assurance? Still Christ is the way; believing in Him alone will give it. How can I triumph over death and secure meetness for heaven? Still is it none but Jesus; He only is the way.

Men have tried other ways; morality, self-righteousness, good works, dependence upon frames and feelings; but they have tried in vain. When shall we learn to cease all our own efforts, to renounce all self-righteousness, and to receive Christ alone as the way?

He as the way is consecrated to us by the steps of our fathers; by the disciples, the prophets, the patriarchs, and by all who are saved. God has placed various sign-posts which meet us in the pathway of life, and direct us to walk in this way. It is our highest privilege and happiness to be found ever walking in it. It is not enough to acknowledge Christ, to profess to know something of Him, to believe in Him, as it is sometimes understood; a dead faith will not bring these blessings; there must be an actual and conscious walking in Christ, the way.

He is the living way. Why the living way? There is a deep spiritual meaning hidden in this relation as in all the relations of Christ. There is the idea of entire dependence upon Him; of continually abiding in Him; of deriving all from Him; we are consciously to walk in Him as in a way. The living Christ is Himself the way. This is often so commented upon and refined as to be explained away in its high and living import. The Holy Spirit alone can reveal to us all that is involved in walking thus consciously in Christ as the way. There is a

blessed truth to every Christian. The Holy Spirit alone can unfold all its deep spiritual meaning. It is full of rich and blessed Christian experience; the Christian's death unto sin and self; his life to righteousness and God. Self is lost sight of, covered, absorbed, put out of sight, lost as the dew-drop in the sunbeam, and Christ is all, so that the believer can say, "For me to live is Christ."

From this relation we see the real, close, and intimate union which must subsist between the soul and Christ. He is our life. It shows us how we can have the spiritual life within us in all its vigour and activity, by receiving Christ. "The life I live is by faith in the Son of God."

We can see the cause of this life declining within us; we do not receive Christ as our life—as the source of all our enjoyment.

We learn how this life can be nourished, strengthened, and sustained, viz., by receiving Christ as our life. He developes His own life within us. He raises the soul from spiritual death. The very beginning of this life comes from Him, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." The continual support of this life comes only from His presence and indwelling. He is the nourishment, and the *sustenance* of this life.

We see how infinitely superior is this life to all other. It is so in itself. It is the life of God in the soul. It is life everlasting. It is so in the enjoyment it gives, and in the influence it exerts upon others. If Christ as our life is believed in and received, our life will resemble Christ's.

And the more we apprehend this truth, the more nearly will our life approach His. We know His was a life of perfect love to God and man ; of self-sacrifice, of prayer, of usefulness, of suffering, and yet of calm satisfaction and joy.

Reader, you have made many attempts to live such a life, but you are conscious of failure. Let this relation show you the cause. You have been looking to second causes, and not to Christ alone as your life ; to the stream, and not to the fountain head. You have not sufficiently realized your own spiritual death, and depended upon Christ alone as your life. You have not sought Him, and received Him only as your life.

Beloved, do you desire this life spiritual, with all its blessedness, with all its enjoyment? God proposes it to you. He says, "He that believeth on Jesus hath everlasting life." "He that hath the Son hath life." He is intensely anxious to give you this life. Do you ask, How can I secure it? The reply is, Simply accept the Christ of

God. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall have life everlasting. This was what St. Paul attained it. Believe in Christ and all shall be yours. Die unto sin; live unto holiness. Believe in Jesus. Look to the Saviour. A simple look will bring you life; and this life shall be yours for ever.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

JOHN VIII. 12.—“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world : he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

JOHN XII. 46.—“I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.”

JOHN I. 9.—“That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”

LIGHT is the most beautiful and glorious object in the universe. It was the first created thing. God said, “Let there be light : and there was light.” It was the reflection of Himself, of His own essence, purity, and glory. The few descriptions we have of God all seem to associate and connect His very being with light. “He dwelleth in light unapproachable, which no man hath seen or can see.” “He covereth Himself with light as with a gar-

ment." "This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." The highest revelation of God to man in Jesus Christ is called, "A light to lighten the Gentiles." Christ is spoken of as the Sun of Righteousness, who shall arise with healing in His wings. He is the bright and morning star. St. John speaks of Him as "the true Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." And Jesus Himself stood forth in the temple at Jerusalem and declared, "I am the Light of the world." And when for a moment the earthly veil is withdrawn which hides the divine nature of Christ from men, what do we behold? Jesus in the mount of transfiguration, His face shining as the sun, His raiment white as the light. When He appeared to Saul of Tarsus, it was an appearance above the brightness of the sun at noonday, so that he fell on his face as dead, and was struck with blindness. Surely these descriptions and statements involve something more than mere emblems or figures of speech. When it is said of Jesus, He is the true Light, it must be in a higher sense than that He teaches true doctrine. He who is light lighteth us. Are we not to understand by this the light His real presence sheds around us and within us? that just as physical light is a reality enabling us to discern objects we

er could behold without it, so is Christ a spiritual light unto us. Just as the eye sees by means of light, so does the mind see spiritual truth by Christ, the Light of the world. It is only in His light we can apprehend spiritual truth and doctrine. A man may be well instructed in all the facts of the natural world, and yet be in spiritual darkness, because he has not opened his mind to admit the Light of the world. The light of the sun brings before us the beauty of hill and dale, mountain and river; the verdour of the foliage; the graceful form; the babbling brook; the variegated aspect of the world of nature in its ten thousand forms, and the goodness and beneficence portrayed in the human countenance. So Christ, as the Light of the spiritual world, brings no less truly before us the duties and attractions of holiness; the love of God; the atonement of Christ; the gift and work of the Spirit; the Christian graces and virtues, faith, hope, love, humility, gentleness, meekness, patience. When we receive Christ as the Light, we behold these in their true light. He shines upon and upon all truth. He illumines the very pages of the Bible, so that they acquire a force, an interest, and a meaning they never had before. When we receive Jesus as our Light, our very countenances may reflect it, as did the face of Moses when coming from the Mount.

This relation of Christ will teach us the reason of our spiritual darkness. This is a sad experience with the Christian, and yet it often recurs; and why? Because Christ is not received as the Light. The shining of the sun will be of no advantage or benefit to us unless we receive its light. What folly it would be to retire to some cellar, or dark our rooms. Continually do we receive and make use of the light of the sun; so do we want to use the Light, Jesus Christ. "He that follow me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have light of life." "When thine eye is single, whole body also is full of light. If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when bright shining of a candle doth give thee light."

We must receive Christ as our spiritual light, as really and as simply as we receive and use natural light. "I am come," says Christ, "and I have brought light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness." This is receiving this light, believing in Jesus. "While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be children of light." Continually to receive Him walking in this light. "If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world; but if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him."

How men are preserved from error when they look directly to Christ as their light. They are preserved from error in doctrine, and in life. Can we describe the blessedness of walking in the light? St. John tells us something about it when he says, "If we walk in the light as He is light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His son cleanseth us from all sin."

Dear reader, you want to receive Christ consciously as the light of your soul, and of all your natural life. Seek to know Him experimentally as the light by which you walk, and then you will reflect His light to others. "Arise, shine," is the divine command; "for thy light is come, and the day of the Lord is risen upon thee." "Shine ye as lights in the world." We are to shine as the moon and stars for the guidance of others, or as the lighthouse to the mariner. We are to let our light shine before men that they, seeing our good works, may glorify our Father which is in heaven. We are to shine thus prominently in our acts and words for the salvation of others; the consolation of each other, and the glory of God.

The advances the Gospel has made; the peculiar circumstances of the times; the encouragements and helps we have, all unite in making this language emphatic and powerful. "Arise, shine." But let us ever

remember we have no light in ourselves ; we therefore cannot shine of ourselves ; we can only in any measure shine as we catch the beams of the Sun of Righteousness. Oh, let us walk continually in His light ; let us bathe our souls daily in it, that in us there may be no darkness at all.

CHAPTER XX.

OUR PORTION.

PSALM CXIX. 57.—“Thou art my portion.”

COL. I. 27.—“Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

PSALM XVI. 5.—“The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance.”

If we would advance in the Christian life, we should know and embrace Christ as the portion of the soul; we should know the value of Him as seen in this relation, our need of Him in it; and how we are actually to realize in our experience all the blessedness it involves. The portion men strive to attain in this life may help us to come to an understanding of God as our portion.

An earthly portion or inheritance yields much comfort and enjoyment, and God who is the portion

God. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall have life everlasting. This was by St. Paul attained it. Believe in Christ and life shall be yours. Die unto sin; live unto holiness. Believe in Jesus. Look to the Saviour. That simple look will bring you life; and this life shall be yours for ever.

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“ Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth : but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.” (Psalm lxxiii. 25, 26.)

CHAPTER XXI.

CAPTAIN OF OUR SALVATION.

HEBREWS II. 10.—“The captain of their salvation.”

JOSHUA V. 14.—“And he said, As captain of the host of the Lord am I now come.”

Few things are clearer, both from the testimony of Holy Scripture and from our own experience, than that our Christian life is a continual conflict. As Christians we have gained much, and therefore we have much to lose. The powers of darkness, the spiritual wickednesses in high places, are ever anxious to wrest from us what we have gained in our redemption—present peace and salvation; and even to conquer and subdue us. This needs no illustration: conflicts with spiritual adversaries are too oft-recurring experiences in the Christian life for any to doubt it. The great matter is for the soul in all these spiritual conflicts to know and *apprehend* Christ as the Captain of salvation, ever

and to lead it on to victory, and so to make it more than a conqueror in all its conflicts with the world, the flesh, and the devil.

This is the only reason the soul is ever overcome and baffled in spiritual conflicts. It does not place itself implicitly under the guidance of its Captain, but goes forth alone to the conflict, and so is sure to fall. The reason of the soul thus going forth alone must be either its ignorance of this relation of Christ in all its fulness, or forgetfulness of it, or a distrust of Him in it. The difference seen in the life and character of the saints in Holy Scripture is traceable to this. Thus Samson was mighty when united to Christ and under His guidance and leadership, but weak as other men when going forth alone. So was Peter when left to himself. His confidence forsook him, and he even denied his Master; but when he learnt to place himself under Christ as his conductor and guide, behold his boldness and success, as at Pentecost and the subsequent occasions in his life. St. Paul is presented to us as always successful. His whole course, both with respect to inward foes, and his outward course, is one triumphant march of successful spiritual conquest. He himself, on one occasion, compares his own course to the triumphal procession of the successful emperors, when he says, "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph

in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish." (2 Cor. ii. 14, 15.) The secret of his success is found in this : his close vital union with Jesus. He looks always unto Jesus. He marches under His banner. He goes where He directs. He obeys His commands ; and so he finds he achieves continual success ; and in the triumphant exultation of his spirit he exclaims, " I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

So is it precisely with every believer now. When a soul is found that has learnt to know and appropriate Christ in this relation, he is a host in himself. What triumphs are there he cannot achieve ? what enemies he cannot conquer ? what sins he cannot overcome ? what habits he cannot form ? what duties he cannot do ?

His Captain is not only directing him all through his course, but is with him, and constitutes his strength.

It is of the highest and first importance to the maintenance of a Christian life, and to success in a Christian course, that Christ should be known, apprehended, and believed in as the Captain of salvation. The Holy Spirit alone can effectually reveal *this relation* to the soul, as He only can reveal any

the relations Christ sustains to His people. But Christ delights now in acting as the living Guide, unseller, and Captain of salvation to all His people. He has by His sufferings obtained eternal salvation for us. His ability He has proved by conquering all the powers of darkness, and declaring, "I have overcome the world." In whom can we trust with such confidence? Will He not complete the work He has begun? Will He forsake us in the hour of our trial? Will He not be with us in our struggles with the evil one, and with our own nature, until at last He places us in final possession of salvation in heaven? Surely He will complete His work. But, beloved, you must trust Him; you must yield Him obedience and confidence. As your Captain you must look to Him only for orders. You must never go forth to battle alone; then you will not merely be a conqueror, but you will come off more than a conqueror. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John v. 4, 5.) You will not merely gain admittance into heaven, but you will have an abundant entrance, and you will hear the approving words of the Judge—"Well done, good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

CHAPTER XXII.

A PRESENT REFUGE.

ISAIAH VIII. 14.—“He shall be for a sanctuary.”

ISAIAH XXXII. 2.—“And a man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind and a covert from the tempest.”

ISAIAH XXV. 4.—“Thou hast been a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat.”

THIS relation in which Christ stands to His people was understood by David when he said, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” (Ps. xli. 1.) “Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.” (Ps. xc. 1.) We all experience that an oft-recurring state of our life is one of distress and danger. It may arise from mental causes; from our circumstances, from our friends; from our very constitution; yet, from whatever cause, here it is within us; we are *conscious* of it. The soul yearns for a sanctuary, a

refuge. Not more earnestly did the soul of the man who had just slain another in Israel of old, turn to the city of refuge nearest to him, than does our soul yearn for a refuge into which we can run.

But at such a time we are all exposed to the peril and danger of seeking some imaginary refuge or sanctuary other than what God has provided in Christ. The intellectual go to science, arts, books; the sensual to the pleasures of appetite. Even the devout go often to the mere exercises of devotion,—to frames, feelings, or good works.

Much that goes for the name of religion is not Christ. Giving largely; attending God's house; much prayer and reading the Bible are often substituted as being themselves refuges instead of Christ; and when the soul rests on them it is perhaps the most dangerous form of all kinds of self-deceit, the most difficult to convince and to undeceive. Oh, for a voice as of thunder to sound in the ears of such, and say, "Going to church, praying, reading the Bible, doing good, however commendable, cannot save you. They are not to be your refuge. Their object is to lead you to Christ only as your refuge. Their end is only answered as they lead you up to Him." "Return unto thy rest, O my soul!" What is that rest? Would any one like to answer, "Prayer, means, the Bible, doing good?" Surely not. No other answer can be supplied than God Himself as

He is revealed in Jesus Christ. He is the refuge His people. He is the chartered sanctuary, having the seal of God. In Him we can be safely secluded. There we can be subject to no possible danger from our enemies, the world, or Satan. The storm of life and of justice may beat pitilessly around but, like Noah in the ark, so are we in perfect safety in Christ. Prophets, apostles, and many in all ages made Him their refuge, and never deceived. Our fathers trusted in Him and were not confounded. Out of Him we have no ground nor guarantee of safety. But in Christ will be well. He is consecrated to us by millions of redeemed spirits, who have fled to Him from the hands of avenging justice, and found safety.

How excellent and suitable a refuge is our Saviour! How unlike the sanctuary to which the king or criminal was wont to rush! there was only there a distant chance of safety. How unsafe too, the cities of refuge provided for the manslaughter; they were not always readily accessible. Christ is always present. They were only a refuge for one particular crime; but Christ is ready to receive those who may have committed any kind of sin. How different is Christ from every other refuge which man may make to himself. His bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it, and the covering is narrower than that a

can wrap himself in it." "Behold all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks, walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled; but this shall ye have at mine hands; ye shall lie down in sorrow." All may come to Christ as a refuge. At all times you may come.

Dear reader, amid the shifting, changing scenes of life—amid its trials and sorrows—do you know Christ as your refuge? Do you realize Him as the Living Sanctuary? What are your impulses when your heart is yearning for relief? Unless taught by the Spirit of God, you know they are to fly to pleasure, to society, to books, or anything to drive away the ennui, rather than to Christ. Try then to know Him; to believe in Him; to go to Him as a refuge, a sanctuary.

When life's anxieties press unduly upon you, remember your refuge is here. Should calamity of any kind overtake you, here is the covert, the living Saviour. Should bereavement come upon you, and take away the loved spirit with whom you have often taken sweet counsel, Jesus only can supply the void. And He will supply it. Are you oppressed with fears concerning the future? Christ will relieve you of them all. Does the past, with its load of guilt, cause you sorrow? He is able to give you relief. All your guilt He took upon Himself. "The Lord laid upon Him the iniquity of us

all." To obtain the full benefit of this refuge have but to run into it; to lift up your eye to Christ. It is always ready for you; always to you. If you have no desire, still look up to Him without. If no feeling, no deep sense of sin, repentance or faith, still look up to Him as you are. If your intellect approves coming to Him as you are, but your heart does not desire to come, still look up to Him without the desire. The very disposition you desire, He will give you; for He is the living Refuge, to living, distressed, guilty hearts, just as we are. The Saviour's loving, yearning heart is always warm for you. He will never repulse you. He never yet said *No* to any human being. "Whoever that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." His language still to all the guilty, weary sinners.

CHAPTER XXIII.

OUR FRIEND.

JOHN xv. 13—15.—"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."

PROV. xviii. 24.—"There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

MATT. xi. 19.—"A friend of publicans and sinners."

PERHAPS this relation of Christ to His people is the one that is the most readily acknowledged by all, and yet is the least realized. Jesus is revealed as His people's Friend. He possesses all the qualities which render His friendship desirable. He has infinite love, knowledge, and power, and yet is willing—nay, anxious—to be your Friend, the

Friend of sinners. You know also your need of a friend. Your own heart plainly tells you this. Your past experience, both of your own weakness and of the instability and unsatisfactory character of earthly friendship, alike tell you this. All this you know, but you do not enjoy this friendship; it is not even so great a reality with you as earthly friendships; His visits do not give you as much pleasure as the visits of many earthly friends; His counsel is not sought or followed as theirs is; you do not know Him by going to Him first of all in every time of perplexity, of trial, of sorrow. But this is what a friend is, if he is really a friend; and this is what Jesus desires to be to you, and what He is pre-eminently calculated to be to you. You may admit this statement in words, and give a ready assent to the statement that this is the relation that Christ sustains to His people, and yet not realize it and appropriate it to yourself, and feel the comfort of it in all your trials, and walk in the strength and enjoyment of it.

But why is this? Is not unbelief the cause? Jesus declares that He takes a lively interest in everything that concerns you, sympathizes with you in all your trials, and feels more tenderly for you than you can for your nearest earthly friends. “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” “In all *their* afflictions He was afflicted.” Could He have

His friendship more than by standing in your earing your sins, and dying for you and in sad ? He urges you at all times to come to th all confidence, just as you are ; but you approach Him, you stand in awe of Him ; or approach Him, it is only with deep feeling ire, not with the unwavering confidence of . Thus His friendship is not reciprocated in you ; all the statements, assurances, and of His love are forgotten or put aside by you, a relationship has little real significance in e and experience.

red, you must believe in Jesus as your who loved you ; who died for you ; who u now, so that He would, if it were neces- en die for you again ; who takes an interest our life. Will you not, then, go and honor th your confidence ? Will you not unbosom : to Him ? Will you not rest in His friend- idance, and protection ? Will you not often ith Him, and speak with Him, and hold nverse with Him ? Or shall He be a stranger in your heart and life and plans ? Will ture without Jesus in the different pathways

Can you stand on the verge of the grave the presence of Jesus to cheer you ? Can r a mind, a conscience, defiled by sin ? Or stand before God's judgment-bar with your

unpardoned crimes resting upon you, and without a friend to advocate your cause? But if Jesus is your Friend, He will support you in every trial, comfort you in every affliction and danger. He will be your joy in life, your hope in death; and in the dread future, at God's judgment-bar, He will plead successfully on your behalf, hide you under His wings, and admit you to heaven, to unspeakable joy and bliss.

Make this, then, your first object, and study to know, to believe, and to realize Jesus as your Friend. You will then carefully avoid all things displeasing to Him. Your friendship will increase in familiarity and degree as life advances. Faith, hope, and love will be brought into more continuous exercise. Gradually, by this continual intercourse you will become more and more like Jesus. The ruggedness and roughness of your nature will be softened, subdued, and overcome by communion with His. You will be conformed to Jesus. You will realize that His friendship is no mere figure of speech, but a great and blessed reality, which time only prove more surely, which time only ripen more fully, and which you will enter upon and realize more perfectly in His more immediate presence, "where there is fulness of joy; and at His right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore."

CHAPTER XXIV.

OUR BROTHER.

HEB. II. 11.—"He is not ashamed to call them brethren."

JOHN XX. 17.—"Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

MARK III. 33-35.—"And He answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? And He looked round about on them which sat about Him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother."

THIS is a beautiful scene described in the Gospels, in which Christ recognizes all, even seeming strangers, as being as near and as dear to Him as natural relatives. His relatives were obtruding upon Him on the ground of kinship. He plainly says that whosoever does His will is as dear to Him as any can be by any other tie: "For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my

sister, and mother." "He is not ashamed to call us brethren."

All these earthly relationships—mother, sister, brother—are intended as a school of discipline to our affections; we are duly to exercise them upon those who stand in these relations to us, that they may lead us to fix our affections upon that entire universal One who absorbs and fulfils them all.

Is not God our Father? Christ is therefore our elder Brother. Many Christians consider such language as pathetic and touching, but as, after all, only a figure of speech. But is it not a reality—a solemn and important fact? Christ is our Brother, not in a figurative sense, but literally and truly our Brother.

True, we have wandered, like the prodigal from our Father's home. Sin, by its degrading power, hides this relationship from us, and reduces us below our proper level; but here we see not only the generosity, but the infinite love of Jesus that, though we are thus reduced, He, our elder Brother, is not ashamed Himself to own and recognize the relationship,—“He is not ashamed to call us brethren.” He is a Brother born for adversity, born into this world especially to help us in our adversity. He is intensely anxious, and at all possible pains, to inspire us with the most implicit confidence in Himself. He says to the desponding and tempted soul, “Am I not a Man and

other?" Oh, that we could learn to receive the truth, and to walk with Christ as a Brother. Will He not be ashamed of us, and yet shall we be in recognizing Him in this relation?

Think, beloved, of the blessings, advantages, and enjoyments of this relationship. He who possesses the attributes of God is your Brother? He who has the greatest tenderness of heart—nay, the love of God, is a Brother. You can walk with Him and have intercourse with Him as a Brother. As a Brother you are a fellow-heir, an heir of God, and co-heir with Him of all the infinite riches of the Kingdom.

How far superior He is to any mere earthly relationship. He is always present. He never can apprehend our thoughts, our words, our acts. His meekness and patience will bear with our failings. His strong arm will support our weaknesses; and all His might is available for us. He is ready to hear us in secret prayer, in confidence telling us of our necessities, our failings, our wants. He is waiting at all times to listen, to answer, to aid. Now important the inquiry, "Have I spiritually apprehended all that is involved in this relationship?" Perhaps you do not know Christ at all as a Brother. You may even be anxiously asking, "How do I come to know Him?" Jesus Himself says, "Whoever shall do the will of God, the same is

my brother, and my sister, and mother." You then can only realize Christ as standing in this relationship to you by obedience, by doing the will of God. "This is the will of God, that we should believe on His Son Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent." If you really believe in Him as the sacrifice for the world's guilt you will love Him; if you love Him you will obey Him and walk with Him continually. You will realize the honor and dignity and glory of having Christ as your elder Brother. Your endeavour will be to act worthy of such an exalted privilege. You will fear lest you should ever degrade your relationship; and so you will be preserved from sin. If Jesus is not ashamed of you, surely you ought never to be ashamed of Him. You will never then be ashamed to do the right, even though you endure the sneer and the ridicule of others. You will likewise remember the example of Jesus in your conduct to your fellow-men. "Jesus is not ashamed to call me a brother; then let me have the feeling of brotherly love to all mankind; let me learn to regard all men as my brethren."

You will thus increase more and more in love to God and man, and in personal holiness and obedience, as you learn to appreciate and love Christ more and more in this relationship, in which He is revealed as our elder Brother.

CHAPTER XXV.

OUR HIGH PRIEST.

HEB. III. 1.—"Consider the High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus."

HEB. V. 6.—"Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec."

HEB. IV. 14.—"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession."

THERE are few relations Christ sustains to His people with which we are more familiar than that of High Priest. The points of resemblance and of difference between Christ and Aaron, are very often dwelt upon; and yet we may know them, and not be really and experimentally acquainted with Christ as our High Priest. To know Him aright in this relation is to see Him as ever living and ever sustaining this relation to us, as offering up by a continual offering His own blood and Himself as a propitiation for our sins, and as ever living within the veil to make intercession for us.

The plate God commanded to be made and placed upon Aaron's forehead, may teach us much respecting the spiritual aspect of Christ's relation as Priest. "And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, Holiness to the Lord. And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord." (Exod. xxviii. 36—38.) This was commanded by God to show His people all that is involved in the priesthood of Christ. No plate is upon the brow of Jesus, no engraving in words "Holiness to the Lord;" but while His spotless holiness is seen in His countenance, it is as if engraven upon His brow, and "*it is always upon His forehead.*" Observe the purpose or object effected by it; that He may bear the iniquity of the holy things, and "*that they may be accepted before the Lord.*" We are conscious of iniquity even in our holy things. *In our worship and our prayers* what wanderings, what coldness. *In our labours* what mixed motives prevail, what seeking honour from one another, instead of that which cometh of God only.

When bowed down with a sense of these our *shortcomings*, we want to lift up the eye of faith to

as our High Priest, and to see Him bearing even "the iniquity of our holy things." We to have such an apprehension of Him as our Priest presenting Himself before God, so that we may see "we are accepted always before the Father." Our love may change; our faith may be weak; our frames and feelings may alter; sometimes we may be light, and sometimes dark with us; but the finished work of Jesus, the *only ground* of our communion with the Father, remains the same.

And that we could see this at all times. It is not what you are, but what Christ is to you. Because of His perfect work we are privileged at all times to draw into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. That is our place or privilege, our holy of holies. There, where mercy and peace have kissed each other; there, where God especially dwells, where the shadowing wings of the cherubim are over the mercy-seat which has been protected by the blood shed there, we are entitled to draw in at all times, to remain in spirit, on the ground of what Jesus has done, and on what He has done.

How blessed is this truth! How great the peace it affords the believer! You have no more up-roaring of conscience concerning sin. Or if you do, you look upward directly to your great High Priest, and it is all removed. You go calmly into

the world of business, of duty, or of daily trial, with the inner eye consciously fixed upon Jesus, appearing on your behalf, presenting His finished work pleading for you; you feel His work has atoned for all; you think no more concerning your own doing as meritorious; you know they have no desert; you place yourself, your cause, just as you are, in the hands of your great High Priest; you come to Him with the most perfect confidence that all will be well.

Beloved, do you thus know Christ as your High Priest? You will see that much precious instruction is to be gained from this relation. The Holy Spirit of God alone can unfold it, and apply it to your heart and circumstances, and give you the joy arising from an apprehension of this truth as a matter of your own personal spiritual experience.

CHAPTER XXVI.

OUR TEACHER.

ISAIAH LXI. 1.—“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me ; because He hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek.”

MATTHEW XI. 29.—“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me.”

WE are apt in this age to overlook how much we are indebted to Christ as a Teacher. We have arrived at our present state of light and knowledge through His teaching. False systems have waned and died before His presence. But we still find much ignorance. The most enlightened is conscious of much ignorance in himself ; the great and difficult problems of life come continually before us, and demand a solution. What is my relation to my Creator ? How can I know, love, serve, and enjoy Him ? What is to be my object in life ? How can I carry out that object ? What am I to think of death, and the great future ? How can I realize happiness and joy ?

These are among the questions that fill the anxious heart with ceaseless throbbings and anxieties. Jesus only is able to give answers that will satisfy the heart. His own words in His own book, contain all the teaching needful for us. But because of the slowness of our understanding, He Himself condescends by His Spirit to be to us the living Teacher. This relation Christ sustains to us of a living Teacher by His Spirit, is, we fear, too much lost sight of. And yet He lives still omniscient, omnipresent, as the Prophet or Teacher of His people. We know the value of a living teacher, one to whom we can go and tell our difficulties; one who will sympathize with us, and help us under them. Just this and much more is Jesus. What living teacher can compare with Him? What depths of sympathy are in His heart! What tenderness, what love, what forbearance with our ignorance. Just as truly and as consciously can we come into contact with His mind as we can with the mind of any earthly teacher. How infinitely superior as a teacher must He be to any human being. In one single moment of time He can clear up difficulties philosophers could never fathom; can solve all our doubts, can present truths to us in a light that will command our conviction, our reverence.

Have we not very much overlooked this relation of Christ as a teacher? Have we not gone to other

and other sources, rather than to Him? He is in exercising this relation, in searching His Word. He will conduct you to higher and higher stages of spiritual knowledge; He will open up to you new paths; He will pour into your minds truth and yet greater light; "eye hath not seen, nor hath the ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.) Oh, then sit at the feet of Jesus. Become a devout, earnest, simple learner of Him. He will show you the preciousness and value of His own Word; its hidden meaning He will make to your view. To all the difficult questions and problems of life He will give an answer of peace. In all the trying periods of life, let us ever prize the value and preciousness of Jesus as a Comforter. Always present, we can never seek, and find Him; always willing, we cannot call nor without securing His help. Will you not then come and sit at the feet of Jesus? Let it be yours to abide ever in this position—let His teaching enter your heart, and control your affections and will, as well as influence your intellect. It is this that makes the teaching of Christ of such transcendent value, that He can

and will also influence the affections and the will. Other teachers may point out the right paths to you; Christ not only does this, but He takes you by the hand, leads you into it, and enables you to walk in it.

Happy the man who thus learns of Jesus; who, taught by Him, knows how to regulate his life, and has acquired all the important lessons Jesus can impart, and who is still waiting upon Him to receive yet continual instructions, and is able to say with calm confidence, "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." This is the infallible teacher man wants. The living present Saviour, Himself, making plain the meaning and force of His own words in His own book.

Reader, may you ever know and realize all the blessedness that is implied in this relation.

CHAPTER XXVII.

OUR ADVOCATE.

1 JOHN II. 1.—“If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

ROMANS VIII. 34.—“Who also maketh intercession for us.”

HEBREWS VII. 25.—“He ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

MOSES, as an intercessor for the people of Israel, was eminently typical of Jesus Christ. When they murmured, rebelled, sinned again and again against God, Moses pleaded for them. When justice was roused, and threatened to destroy them, Moses employed (as in Exodus xxxii.) the strongest arguments, and secured their pardon. The High Priest likewise was the great intercessor for the people of Israel. He could enter the holy of holies and plead there for them.

The consideration of this may help us to arrive

at the understanding of the great truth, Christ our Advocate, our Intercessor, who ever liveth. We want to know Christ in this relation, and to have the comfortable assurance it will bring. Often, like the Jews, we are led into sin. We are guilty of departure from God. God's justice is just the same—strict, severe, and cries out, "Cut him down." The thunderbolts of His wrath are prepared ready to descend upon you. Justice cannot, will not spare you. You see and deeply feel your ill desert. Overwhelmed with a sense of sin and shame, your hand upon your mouth, your mouth in the dust, your only feeling is "Unclean, unclean!" You cannot look up. You then want to know and see Jesus, as in the heavenlies, carrying on this work of intercession for you. Not so earnestly did Moses plead for the people of Israel, as Jesus is there pleading for you. He makes use of the most powerful of all arguments. He shews His own wounds, and pleads that they may avail for you. He cannot say you have not sinned. Justice He acknowledges is just in its requirements. But when justice cries, "Cut him down, he is unfruitful; why does he cumber the ground?" then is heard the voice of Jesus, "Let him alone this year also, until further privileges and opportunities are given him; until other attempts are made by the gentle influences of love and grace to soften and subdue

art." Not merely does He plead for us in
; He pleads also for us on earth, by His

oft recurring experience of our life is that of
ity, distress, darkness. But here is One
resent who can see our secret thoughts, can
very sigh and groan. In this state, just as
e, He will come to you. He will subdue
eart by the assurance of His real, deep sym-

The exact argument you want He will give.
ie truth you stand in need of He will reveal.
romise that will bring hope, He will make
. The desire, the ability to think, to pray,
I give.

tongue can tell, no pen can describe, the
ness of this relation of Christ, when it is
hood by the revelation of it to the heart by
ly Spirit.

en Christ is apprehended and appropriated as
lvocate and Intercessor of the soul, all is
ss, and satisfaction, and peace within. You
/ give up your own case as a sinner to
; you leave yourself in His hands; the fullest
nce you must exercise in his Advocacy.
advocate, and Judge, and Supreme Arbiter,
eady declares, if you but trust yourself to
there shall be no condemnation to you.
imply and sincerely should you rely upon

His word, and commit yourself and your just as you are, entirely into His hands. No longer to excuse yourself before God; or to state your condition before going to Him; or to state your good desires in your heart that you may make yourself worthy to go: but yield yourself as you are. He is our Advocate. The advocate takes up the case of a criminal as it is; it is for a criminal that the advocate is needed. So it is for you as a sinner. Christ the Advocate, the Intercessor came to earth to plead within your heart, and beget the holy desires. He will plead for you in heaven. He will employ the argument wherewith to win justice, even His own sufferings and death for you and in your stead.

Dear reader, make Jesus your Advocate. Have the greatest confidence in Him. Listen to His gentle intercessions within you. He would deliver you to liberation from death, and sin, and Satan, and evil. He will further give you desires after holiness, and will conduct you into heavenly blessings greater than words can express, because "He liveth to make intercession for us."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

OUR REDEEMER.

JOB XIX. 25.—"I know that my Redeemer liveth."

ISAIAH XLIII. 14.—"Thus saith the Lord, your Redeemer, a Holy One of Israel."

HEB. IX. 12.—"Having obtained eternal redemption for us."

It was the spirit of bright hope and confident faith which enabled the Apostle St. Paul to exclaim, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." (Gal. iii. 13.) As Christians we too should have the same bright hope and confident faith. In order to do this we must know and believe in Jesus as our Redeemer.

Christ has paid the price of our redemption; not with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with His own precious blood. (1 Peter i. 18.) He offered Himself as the propitiation, covering, or atonement for our sins. He died on the cross fo

our sins. He was crucified for us. He suffered the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. He stood in our place and was our substitute. He carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions, and by His stripes we are healed. As our representative He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

All these precious truths, and many more, are included in the relation Christ sustains to us as our Redeemer. These truths, if we know Him in this relation, will become great realities to us. How great the blessedness and joy arising from this knowledge. You then will see that Christ died in your stead, and on your behalf; that His dying for you met all the claims of public justice against you, and that now there is no condemnation to you; and your heart will be overwhelmed with gratitude and love to Him.

Not merely do you want to know Christ as a living Redeemer from the curse of the law, but as the Redeemer who will break up your spiritual bondage, and deliver you from the present power and dominion of sin. Here you must learn how completely, when left to yourself, you are the slave of sin, with no power, no desire to help yourself. Jesus only can redeem you from all iniquity. Do you desire one who can turn the secret springs

of thought and action into another channel? This He can accomplish: "I know, He says, the thoughts which come into your mind, every one of them." Do you wish for one who has power enough to redeem you from the habit of sin, from the powers of darkness, and all your spiritual foes? Then Jesus is omnipotent, and can redeem you thus, since by His own might He overcame the world and Satan.

Do you wish one who is always present, to whom you can go at all times, whatever may be the character of your trial, whatever may be the frame of your mind. Then just such a Redeemer is Jesus. Greatly does He delight in this work. More willing is He at all times to visit and redeem His people, than they are to be redeemed.

Would that we had more communion with Him in this relation as our Redeemer. Would that we knew Him indeed in this His living character. Would that when our pathway is rugged and difficult, when clouds hang over and around us; when fears are within us because of sin, of distance from God, of felt earthly tendencies; when the past is black and ominous, the present intricate and difficult; the future full of anticipated trials: would that we could go, just as we are, to the very feet, yea, to the very heart of our Divine Redeemer.

Testing thus we should realize to the full His *power*, His willingness to redeem. But if you will not trust Him, if you will not commit all to Him, you cannot know Him at all in this blessed relation. You may read of a Redeemer; you may speak of a Redeemer; but you do not know Him. Nor do you know Him fully until you have so been to Him as to let Him take every cloud from your brow, every weight from your anxious heart; and until, with a beauty, an appropriateness, and a power little understood by others, you hear His own voice fondly, tenderly whispering to your heart, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." (John xiv. 1.)

This Redeemer is ours, is yours, in every *stage of life*. He was the comfort of Jacob on his dying bed, when he said, "The angel which hath redeemed me from all evil." He has been the comfort of millions in all ages. He was the support David looked to when he said, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." (Psalm xxiii. 4.)

May He be ours; may He be yours; may you at all times learn to know Him, to look to Him, to believe in Him as your Redeemer.

CHAPTER XXIX.

OUR KING.

PSALM XLV. 6.—“Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever : the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.”

2 PETER I. 11.—“For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

1 TIM. VI. 15.—“Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.”

ALL the relations of Christ to His people are designed to draw us nearer to Him ; some by their moving aspect melt our hearts into obedience, but others accomplish the same end by their grand, sublime, and majestic character. We see what a marvellous union there is in the character of Jesus, the despised Nazarene, who was rejected of His fellows ; a worm of the earth, who knew poverty, suffering, humiliation ; who was scourged and

crucified, and is also "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality and eternal life, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen or can see." And yet all these aspects of the character of Jesus, and all these relations He sustains to us are exactly suited to the varying phases of our experience. Thus our wills are often rebellious and opposed to righteousness and the claims of Jesus; our desires perverse, our affections languid, and our temper doubting and refractory. We then require a knowledge of Jesus as a King and Saviour to set up His government within us; to write His laws in our hearts; to induce us to obedience; to firmly establish His kingdom and rule over our entire spiritual nature, and to sway His sceptre over our whole being. We lift up our thoughts to Him, and we see Him not only as a majestic King, but as the King of kings, and Lord of lords, His eyes as a flame of fire, denoting His omniscience; on His head many crowns, the proofs of His power and of His conquests; attended by heavenly armies—ruling the nations with a rod of iron. This should lead us to *submission*. How vain is any opposition to such a King. "There are those who would not that He should reign over them. But He will say, Bring them hither, and *slay them* before me."

but because Christ's kingdom is a spiritual kingdom, this submission is not an outward submission, but a "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." (2 Cor. 10.)

When we offer the petition, "Thy kingdom come," we only offer it aright when we desire that sin, corruption, and tyranny in ourselves and others, may be overcome; that Jesus may reign as King in every heart, which reign is that of righteousness and truth.

Christ is then our King, as well as our Redeemer and Friend. Beloved, you must be His obedient, loyal, loving subject, as well as His sheep and His people. Are you willing to yield to Him this heart allegiance to His laws as He requires? "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and all thy strength; and thy neighbour as thyself." Do you realize that He is your King; that His eye is ever upon you; that you are ever in His presence, and cannot possibly escape it?

And when you find it hard to obey His laws, do not forget to see that His kingly characteristics are mercy, sympathy, self-sacrifice, and love, as well as power; that His kingly power is yours to enable you to obey, and that He will Himself write His laws

upon your heart and mind ; that is, He will constrain you to obey them ?

Oh, what *confidence* should this relation of Christ beget in our hearts towards Him. He is our King ; then all is well. All must and shall be well. "The Lord reigneth ; let the earth rejoice, and the multitude of the isles be glad thereof." He will govern us and all things in love. He will perfect the work He has begun in our hearts. Looking upon Him in His kingly relation, can you not say with St. Paul, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." (2 Tim. i. 12.)

When tempted to unbelief or doubt, only look upward to Jesus as your King ; behold the government upon His shoulders. He administers the moral and providential government of this world, and overrules all for your benefit : "All things work together for good to them that love God." "He is the head over all things to the Church." Can you withhold your confidence from Him when you see Him as your King and Governor ? Can you disobey Him in view of this relation He sustains to you ? Dare you go into the world and indulge in sin, and become in the very face of the eternal Majesty of heaven a disloyal and rebellious subject ?

CHAPTER XXX.

OUR PHYSICIAN.

ix. 12.—“They that be whole need not a physician; they that are sick.”

viii. 17.—“Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.”

cxlvii. 3.—“He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.”

body is constantly liable to ailments and diseases, so is the soul. Innumerable are our temporal and spiritual diseases. Often, no sooner is one healed, than we are afflicted with another. God

infinite love and mercy has provided a Physician, an able and willing to heal all our diseases. Some of the characteristics of an able physician are seen in our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus

empathy needed? He is touched with the feelings of our infirmities, and was tempted in all

points like as we are. Is an exact knowledge of the state of the case requisite? He can see into the heart and read its inmost thoughts; He is acquainted with all our ways. Is power to heal required? He has but to speak the word, and there is perfect restoration. Is love to this special work needed? Then behold Him voluntarily leaving His throne of glory to enter upon it, and seeking out the very worst cases, publicans and sinners, that He may heal them.

His power was exercised when upon the earth in some special cases, that He might exhibit to the world throughout all time His willingness and ability to give perfect spiritual healing to all the sons and daughters of humanity. Thus He said to the man sick of the palsy, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee," to show that He can and will in like manner heal even now all who come to Him. He convinced the woman of Samaria of her disease, and then revealed Himself as the Physician who could cure her. He probed the heart of Simon Peter, and then healed his disease, and fitted him for a high position in the ministry of the Church. So in like manner the Saviour lives as the Physician of the soul; He is as ready now to restore and to heal all who come to Him as He was then.

Beloved, this is a great reality, an infinite bless-

a precious truth. To all of us who are sore
ken with the grievous disease; sin, here is the
edy that can cure; the balm that can heal; the
sician who can restore. Not merely can He
it the penalty of sin—everlasting punishment
he future—but He can remove the curse and
ne of sin which is now crushing the spirit and
rating it from goodness and truth.

Who is there who is not conscious of many
tual infirmities and sicknesses? Even good
are subject to them. The Psalmist exclaimed,
aid, this also is mine infirmity.” Some have
nfirmity of ignorance; thus many are ignorant
ie fulness and preciousness of the Saviour in
relations.

thers are continually distressed with doubts
fears. Others have some easily besetting sin,
emper, sloth, covetousness, pride, censorious-

Others continually feel a difficulty in fixing
thoughts and affections on things that are
e. In prayer the mind wanders, and even
a prayer is offered, “we know not what we
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ur faith is often weak. Our indisposition to
ge in active work for God and for the good of
is an infirmity or spiritual disease.

1, would that whenever we are conscious of
of these infirmities, we would immediately

apply to the Physician of our souls. There is no infirmity to which we are subject but He can heal. But we must place ourselves wholly in His hands; we must receive Him as our spiritual Physician; we must obey His every direction; we must follow and carry out all He prescribes. He will Himself enable us to do this. We should aim to have a clear apprehension of Christ as our Physician, as bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows; as having been made sorrowful for us; and as bending under griefs which in justice belonged to us, and thus acquiring the right and power to heal and restore us.

How unspeakably precious does this relation make Christ appear to us! What a view does it give us of the enormity of sin! When we contemplate Christ as suffering thus in our stead, our affections are so engrossed with Him and His love, as to lead us to feel we would rather die at once than sin against Him.

Beloved, seek to have this view of Christ as the Physician of your soul. The Holy Spirit is able and willing to reveal Him unto you thus, if you ask in faith.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE LAMB OF GOD.

SAH LIII. 7.—“He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth.”

JOHN I. 29.—“Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.”

ISAIAH LVI. 22.—“And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities.”

The inspired writers unite in setting Jesus forth as the Lamb, and as the Lamb of God. John dwells upon it, as in the passage quoted above. The morning and evening sacrifice of the Jews was especially emblematic of Christ. St. John the Baptist, although he knew Him not, yet boldly bore this wondrous testimony: “Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.” St. Peter speaks of our being “redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” But St. John, in Revelation, loves especially to dwell upon

Christ in this aspect. As a Lamb He receives the worship of the elders and of the redeemed; as Lamb slain He appears in heaven; by the blood of the Lamb the redeemed overcome; their song "the song of Moses and of the Lamb;" it is the Lamb who feeds them and leads them to the fountains of living waters; heaven itself is the marriage supper of the Lamb; and the wicked fear most the wrath of the Lamb, while they pray to the rocks and the hills to fall upon them, and to hide them from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb.

This expression, the Lamb of God, as applied to Christ, is designed to teach us His spotless innocence and purity, His gentleness, meekness, and patience. Just as He meekly bore, as a Lamb, the sufferings at and preceding His death, so gently will He bear the sufferings of our sins and inflict upon Him; so gently will He chide us, though He is omnipotent. So meek and tender is He, that we can come to Him as to a Lamb. When once we turn to Him we shall have no more bitter reproaches or upbraidings, but, like the father with his prodigal son, who smothered his confessions with his kisses and tears of joy, so will Jesus receive all who come to Him.

St. John the Baptist, in this wonderful testimony, had reference to the scape-goat, over whose h

the sins of Israel were confessed. Christ, in like manner, as the Lamb of God, in His loneliness, in His sufferings, stood in the place of sinners, and bore away the sin of the world. This should lead us to regard the atonement as actually made for us, as an accomplished fact, and should show to us the way we are to realize all its benefits and blessings. "Behold the Lamb of God." "Looking unto Jesus." By a look sin entered the world and ruined it; and now it is by a look of simple, earnest faith to Christ, as the Lamb of God, slain for us, the world is saved.

This should be ever the believer's attitude and spirit—"looking unto Jesus." This is the grand secret of success in the Christian life. This is the real source of happiness and peace—to look, not into self, but away from self to Christ; to look, not at your own frames and feelings, at what you are, but to what Christ is, to what Christ has done for you. Your mind should ever be towards Him, as the face of the sunflower to the sun, that it may derive its light, heat, and life from it.

The happy, useful Christian is one who is well skilled in looking to Jesus under all circumstances. When the burden of sin rests heavily upon your conscience, He says, "Come unto me." When the heavens are as brass, still look to or trust in Him. In seasons of temptation you will triumph by looking to Him; in times of weakness you will gain

strength as you look to Him. If you desire deeper penitence, a sense of pardon, increase of faith, a fuller assurance, a brighter hope, a stronger love, then look unto Jesus; you can have them at His cross. But you must learn so to look as that your attention, your thoughts, your heart, are absorbed. This is one object of life, with its trials and crosses, to teach us this lesson, to disentangle our supreme affections from earth and earthly objects, to enable us to look stedfastly, continually, and supremely to Jesus.

Beloved, how important is the inquiry, "Am I thus looking to Jesus? Do I thus behold Him as 'the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world?'" The work is completed for you; for you He endured the sufferings of the cross. Why did He thus suffer, but that you might be saved? He was wounded for your transgressions; He was bruised for your iniquities, that you by His stripes might be healed. But before this work will avail you, you must accept it, you must look unto Jesus as the Lamb of God slain for you. As the Israelites were bitten by serpents, so are you smarting under the pangs of sin. His language is, "Look unto me, and be ye saved." "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

CHAPTER XXXII.

WONDERFUL.

ISAIAH IX. 6.—“ His name shall be called Wonderful.”

ATT. XXI. 15.—“ The chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did.”

ISAIAH XXV. 1.—“ O Lord, I will praise thee ; thou hast wonderful things.”

are too apt to overlook the deep meaning and ruction which are to be found in all the names titles of Christ. They are all intended to strate and set forth to us, not only the dignity the character of the great Redeemer, but the ig relations He sustains to His people. The lom of God seems to labour for description in ing forth His glories. All nature, in its endless ety, is laid under contribution, and yet it is efficient. “ His name shall be called Wonder-
” Language is at fault ; it cannot express His

glories ; a word must therefore be employed, concerning Him, which will express this thought—Wonderful.

When we contemplate the character, the offices, the relations of Christ to His people, and His infinite sensibility to all their needs, we can only exclaim, Wonderful ! As we advance in our Christian experience and become more and more acquainted with the fulness of Jesus, our wonder is excited more and more. From whatever point of view we regard Him, whether as God-man incarnate, as our Redeemer, Mediator, or Friend, He is still wonderful ; each separate relation seems to reveal Him to us in this light, as the Wonderful ; but when we think of Him in all He has done, in all He sustains to us, we see Him indeed as the Being whose name shall be called “ Wonderful.”

Wonderful were His works on earth—His miracles displays of Divine power, His labours, His discourses, His prayers, His sufferings, His meekness, His firmness, His death, His resurrection and ascension—and, to us, still more wonderful, if possible, is His real presence, His tender sympathy, His unquenchable love, His present help—wonderful!—the actual present blessings He brings us,—the consciousness of pardoned sin,—the peace, His own peace that passeth all understanding, the joy that *is unspeakable*, the sense of friendship and adoption

-wonderful!—the things He has still promised and which we look forward to only in with His name—triumph over temptation, world, death, the grave, a glorious resurrection in His own presence.

Conviction of His wonderful being will not abate our wonder more and more as we advance in the Christian life, and become more acquainted with Him, but, even through eternity, we will adore Him in His wonder-working, so that we think of Him as “Wonderful.”

Let this title of Christ lead you to see how low are your views of Him, since you seldom had such views of Him as have you to exclaim, “Wonderful!” while contemplating the excellences of His character, relationship.

Perhaps your experiences of Him are as low as your thoughts. You do not know of Him to know how wonderful He must be intimate with a friend to be acquainted with his excellences; and you must commune with Christ in holy communion if you know Him as wonderful. Or perhaps you think of Him as wonderful in relation to spiritual life; you think of Him as wonderful in respect to the works of wonder He has done on the earth. But those works were intended to lead you to Him, and are sym-

bolical of yet greater works, of a spiritual character, He is always ready to perform.

How wonderful is He when He opens the eyes of the mind, and first convinces of sin, and brings the soul to loathe itself as unclean and guilty before God; and still more wonderful when He leads that soul to see that, by His one offering, He has made an atonement and perfect satisfaction for sin, and the soul, in the belief of this truth, is led to assured and perfect peace; and then follows a deeper insight into the need of Christ, and the infinite fulness of Jesus in supplying that need which calls forth, to the highest degree, the rapturous admiration and wonder of the soul.

All is wonderful in relation to Christ. The soul needs to be so acquainted with Him as to excite and keep constantly awake its wonder and admiration. The philosopher, the man of science, and the man of the world, are so devoted to their several objects that their wonder and curiosity are ever awakened; they are in sympathy with their subjects; and the Christian must be so in harmony with Christ, so devoted to Him, to the study of His works and ways, as to continually realize that He is indeed wonderful. Yes, "His name shall be called Wonderful."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

COUNSELLOR.

ISAIAH IX. 6.—“ His name shall be called Counsellor.”

PROVERBS VIII. 14.—“ Counsel is mine and sound wisdom.”

PSALM XXXII. 8.—“ I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye.”

ALL Christians profess to believe in an overruling providence, not only with respect to the affairs of the world and of the Church, but with respect to themselves. But there is even a higher and more blessed view of this truth in God's Word. We there find Jesus is Himself revealed as the Counsellor of His people. It is our happiness and privilege in all the trying periods of our life, yea, at every step and stage of our life, to know and apprehend Him in this relation. It is not enough to acknowledge His wisdom, His ability, his willingness to counsel us, unless we actually make Him

our Counsellor, and go to Him in every case of doubt. You may hold in theory the importance of consulting Christ in your affairs, and yet not have the habit of actually going to Jesus for counsel, and naturally turning to Him as you would to a wise and experienced earthly friend; and yet why do you not? In any difficulty can you doubt His wisdom to extricate you, or to guide you aright? Surely the fountain and source of wisdom must be better than any stream.

Perhaps you imagine that this matter is too trivial to take to Jesus, and some such thought as this may be in your mind; that you will not trouble Him with such things as these,—your worldly business, your petty domestic trials, your last disappointment, your wounded feelings for an unkind remark of a supposed friend. But remember nothing is really trivial, and especially is nothing trivial to Him who has taken such pains with the wing of the butterfly and the objects revealed in the microscopic world, and if He has shown such interest in what we call the minor objects of the natural world, how much more will He take an interest in the mental and moral, and in those things that, however minutely, affect our spiritual life. Besides this, is He not revealed as His people's Counsellor, ever living as such, and both anxious and willing *at all times* to counsel His people. It should be

the habit of your life to refer all things to Him, to turn and consult Him on all occasions, respecting everything that concerns you. This will not merely give you the benefit of all His wisdom in your course of life, but will bring you so frequently to communion with Him that your life will be made spiritual. You will go to Him in secret to your Counsellor, as Jacob did when afraid of the approach of Esau, and like him you will come forth again in your family or in public, to face the emergency with a mind calm, cool, collected, and ready to perform business or duty in the best possible manner. But Jesus must be consulted as a Counsellor with implicit confidence in His ability and willingness to give the directions you need.

Jesus as Counsellor promises, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go! I will guide thee with mine eye." But you must commit your way unto the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. You must then renounce your own wisdom, and be ready to give up your own judgment, and be led entirely by Him. You must consult Him so truly as to be willing to give up your own opinion if necessary, and to take His wisdom and to follow His direction instead of your own; nothing doubting, but that when you thus consult Him He will direct you right. This supposes a spiritual mind often in

communion with Him, and such a mind knows His voice too well to mistake any other for it. It will be readily distinguished as emphatically the course *He* directs.

Thus, beloved, should you learn in life and all through life in all things to lay hold of Christ by faith as your Counsellor. Thus should you continue to walk in His counsel, and to abide in His love. To say on earth "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel," and afterward He will receive thee to glory.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE MIGHTY GOD.

JOHN XX. 28.—“ And Thomas answered and said unto
m, My Lord and my God.”

ISAIAH IX. 6.—“ The mighty God.”

1 JOHN V. 20.—“ This is the true God and eternal life.”

ew truths are more plainly taught in the Holy
riptures than the divinity of Jesus Christ. As a
atter of argument it is plain, and can be proved
y an accumulated series of overwhelming proofs.
ut what we are more concerned about here, is to
ow that there is a higher truth than the admission
the orthodox doctrine of the divinity of Christ as
mere theory or opinion. The mere fact any one
ay admit, but the great truth which underlies it,
at it is the true and mighty God, who as such is
e Saviour of the soul, is a matter of personal re-
lation; for in this sense “No man can say that
sus is the Lord, save by the Holy Spirit.”
hen once this great truth is accepted by the in-

dividual soul as the Holy Spirit is willing to reveal it, the soul will know Christ, and walk with Christ as the true God and eternal life. There will be no need for argument to convince. He will have the witness in himself, in that his own individual necessities are really supplied. None but a divine Saviour could give him the constant assurance of the pardon of sin, could fill his heart with such peace, could accept the worship he is constrained to yield, and give such blessed results arising from that communion. The soul that thus spiritually apprehends Christ and holds communion with Him is as sure of His divinity as he is of his own existence.

We must thus spiritually apprehend Christ as God. We must believe in and receive Him as "The true God and eternal life." We must come and submit to Him and worship Him as the living and the mighty God. When St. Thomas thus believed in Him, Jesus said unto him, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

This belief alone meets the necessities of our nature. Difficult problems agitate the heart. How can my sin be forgiven? How can I, as a guilty sinner, become just before God? To whom can I commit the keeping of my soul? To whom can I go for eternal life? The answer is, to none other

Divine Redeemer. As sinners, we dare not sh a holy God; but when we behold an ent made by the Divine Being, it fully satisfies hearts. This belief stills the upbraidings of conscience, and sets it for ever at rest, and brings peace. We then can rejoice without apprehension or fear in our knowledge of God and in our relation to Him. Relying upon Him, we can look unto death and the judgment with calmness and submission, as did St. Paul, when he said, "In whom I have believed, and am persuaded he is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." (2 Tim. i.

boundless the consolation this truth affords. We behold the true and mighty God who will dwell with us. It was He who made all things, and in whom were all things, who veiled the brightness of His glory, and assumed our nature. It exalts and dignifies our nature when we remember that the Son of God was once clothed with it; it comforts our sufferings when we see that He was in our pains tried as we are, "For in that He Himself suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." As the true and mighty God, Jesus is worthy our highest adoration and worship. Can we fear to trust Him who has over all things? Can we withhold our

warmest love, our best service, our most devoted obedience and sacrifice from Him, who though the mighty God, has stooped so low, and done so much for us? Beloved, this relation is full of spiritual consolation. He shows you in it that all that He is, and all He has is available for you. As the mighty God, He is your Saviour; He is mighty to save, able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto Him. Not one of His redeemed shall perish. Dwell no longer upon your own infirmity and weakness, but think of your Saviour's omnipotence and grace. He alone can save you. You cannot save yourself. There is no case He cannot reach. No heart so hard, but He can soften it; no mind so dark, but He can enlighten it. You have only to submit to Him, and He will save you; to believe in Him, and you shall have everlasting life.

Beloved, have you this confidence in Jesus, as the true and mighty God? Do you realize in your daily experience all that this relation involves? It will assuredly yield you the greatest joy and comfort and strength to know and believe in Jesus day by day as the true and mighty God and Saviour.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE BREAD OF LIFE.

JOHN VI. 51.—“I am the living bread which came from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall never.”

JOHN VI. 35.—“He that cometh to me shall never . . .”

man could have uttered such language as this ; he were Divine, a fanatic, or an impostor, the two latter suppositions cannot even momentarily be entertained. The former is the only rational conclusion we can arrive at. He was

He professed, Divine. This is a divine promise. But what a truth is it. The Divine ; in human form comes to us, who spiritually and intellectually are poor hungry beings, and presents Himself to us and says, “I am the Bread of Life.” Let us never forget that these words are of great import. Christ is now saying in His Word

to universal humanity, just as He said it in human form, "I am the Bread of Life." The exclamation of the people, "Evermore give us this bread," is the cry of humanity, the key that unlocks the continual longing after satisfaction that lies deep in the heart. Gold, power, position, knowledge, are eagerly sought by men, in the hope that satisfaction will be realized by them. The eagerness of the pursuit diverts the thoughts; the flush of excitement brings a momentary relief. But if the good be gained, what then? Inward dissatisfaction; earnest longing for something else, something higher. The true interpretation of this ever recurring phase of our experience, is to be found alone in the experimental realization of these words, "I am the Bread of Life." Christ Himself is the continual sustenance, support, and satisfaction of the soul.

This relation of Christ which He now sustains to us, like many others, is often overlooked. We regard it as a figure of speech, and so we dismiss it from our minds. But is it not real? Did not Christ mean all these words can possibly convey when He uttered them? Is there not even a deep spiritual meaning hidden beneath them, which we find it difficult to understand, unless we are taught by the Divine Spirit, whose work it is to take of the *things* of Christ, and show them unto us?

Are not these words the key whereby we can interpret every unhappy life; every life that is unhealthy; every life that is weak, and a failure. Here is the cause. You are not feeding upon the right food. Christ meets the intense longings and aspirations of your soul, and says, "I alone can meet them, for I am the Bread of Life." The body can only be sustained by suitable food administered continually. It feeds upon it; it is its nourishment; without which it would decay and die. So is it with the soul, and in relation to the spiritual life. Jesus says, "I am the Bread of Life." He does not say, ordinances, Church, prayer, the Bible. Many rest in these alone, and do not in them partake of Christ. They rise no higher, and then wonder at their unhealthiness, and at their want of happiness, and at their own dissatisfaction; but is it to be wondered at? It is only as you really feed upon Christ as the Bread of Life, and eat His flesh, and appropriate Him as the nourishment of your soul, that you can have spiritual life. (John vi. 53—55.)

Thus appropriating Christ to yourself in this relation, you will know the blessedness of His words, "He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." Blessed state! in which you so feed upon Christ, as in this world and in the body to have perfect

satisfaction. They are Christ's own words, "shall never hunger." Bread perfectly satisfies the body; why should we doubt that the Bread of Life can and will perfectly satisfy the soul? We dare not doubt the capability of Christ to meet the utmost needs of the heart. How can we doubt His willingness to come and give us this satisfaction, since for this end He came into the world? But yet you say, "I do not know it, I do not realize it." But may not the cause of this be found in the fact that you have been feeding upon that which is not bread? In other words, have you not been looking for your continual satisfaction to other objects than Jesus only? Have you continually kept Him before your mind as the only satisfaction of all the wants and desires of your heart? If not, you cannot expect the blessing. It is only promised to him that cometh, believeth, and eateth. The very expression, *eateth*, shows the continuous repetition of faith in Him. It shows that you must in your heart give up feeding upon the husks of the world, and look to Jesus only for satisfaction; that is, that you must give up all to Him. That you must receive Him only and continually as the inward fountain of satisfaction, as the Bread of Life. Understanding thus Christ as the Bread of Life, are you inclined to say with some of old, "This is a *hard saying*, who can hear it?" If so, linger a

ent, listen, the words of Jesus sound still in ears. (63 ver.) "Will ye also go away?" Let me ask you, as St. Peter asked Jesus, "To n can you go?" If you turn from the true d and the true Life, there remaineth only s, only death. Will you grudge parting with s, that you may receive the true Bread, with 1, that you may have Life?

loved, whoever you may be, calling yourself ristian, an enquirer, a sinner; dissatisfied, d, troubled in your inmost soul, Christ comes u as the Bread of Life. He asks you to take . He invites you just as you are, to come and upon Him. He promises that you shall find nd even more than your heart can wish, in self. No more dissatisfaction if you feed upon . No more hunger; He will appease all the e of your heart. No more death: "If any eat of this Bread he shall live for ever." For sense the most literal, true, and absolute, and h the quickening Spirit alone can reveal in all xep meaning and bearing upon us, Jesus is the d of Life.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE WATER OF LIFE.

JOHN IV. 13, 14.—“Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

JOHN VI. 37.—“If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.”

1 COR. X. 4.—“And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them: and that rock was Christ.”

Few earthly figures that represent heavenly truth are so frequently employed in Holy Scripture as thirst and water. The water God miraculously gave the Israelites in the desert, was intended to symbolize Christ, who is the Water of Life. Isaiah set forth the blessings of salvation in this language, “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.” (Isaiah lv. 1.) So did Ezekiel (xlvi. 9): “And everything shall live whither the river cometh.” Again in xxxvi. 25, “Then will I

cle clean water upon you, and ye shall be
" The Psalmist likewise frequently employed
There is a river, the streams whereof shall
glad the city of God." (Psalm xli. 4.)
as the hart desireth the water-brooks, so
h my soul after thee, O God. My soul is
t for God, yea, even for the living God."
n xlii. 1, 2.) These figures all received their
t fulfilment in Jesus. He sat by the side of
ell at Sychar, and said, "Whosoever drinketh
s water shall thirst again." (John iv. 13.)
ood in the temple at Jerusalem and openly
ed, "If any man thirst, let him come unto
d drink." He still says to the whole world,
ill give unto him that is athirst of the foun-
f the water of life freely." Nothing less than
an be the meaning of our blessed Lord, when
ttered this invitation, that all the desires of
nature expressed by thirst can meet their
t satisfaction in Him. We know how intense
he desires of our nature. We need only
erate the desire after happiness, pleasure,
ledge, peace, pardon. He can, He will per-
satisfy the heart in all these respects. Look-
to Jesus, the good man is then satisfied from
lf, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall
again: but the water that I shall give him
be in him a well of water springing up into

everlasting life." He has a source of satisfaction in himself that will never fail.

Alas! many professing Christians do not realize this satisfaction; so far from this, some are found asking, "Who will show us any good?" The enemies of Christianity, judging from them, might ask, "Is Christianity really the satisfaction it professes to be?" We unhesitatingly reply, "It is, and far more."

But unless water is taken it cannot possibly satisfy thirst. Christ says, "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink."

There is no limit in this invitation as to the kind of thirst; but He says, "If any man thirst." We want habitually to go to Jesus and drink.

As every new desire springs up in the heart, let us go to Jesus with it. If lawful, He may, when we have told it to Him, gratify it in His own time, or if not, the mere act of telling it to Jesus will relieve the mind. If unlawful, He will quench it, or will impart such a view of Himself as the satisfaction of the soul, that it will be perfectly satisfied with Him.

If you do not know Jesus in this relation, if you do not continually go to Him that you may obtain this satisfaction from Him, you need not wonder if you have not happiness here to the full. *This is the happiness of heaven: "In my presence*

is the fulness of joy, and at my right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

Dear reader, do you want this satisfaction? Jesus can give it you; He can give it you on this earth; He is waiting and willing to give it you even now. Will you accept it? Will you resolve to turn your eye away from every other object for the supreme satisfaction of your heart, and to keep it at all times steadily fixed upon Jesus only; so that in all your engagements of life you may feel, "These are not my satisfaction, but Jesus." All your daily blessings and mercies you so learn to employ, that they are but as a scale or ladder leading you to Jesus, the Author and Giver of them all. He will then indeed be in you as a "well of water springing up to everlasting life."

He invites you all through His Word, as well as in His own memorable language, to come and partake of Him. The Bible could only close with this blessed invitation, as if all the purposes of this blessed book, and all the repeated invitations found a perfect climax and condensation in this most perfect and thrice repeated invitation: "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE DOOR.

JOHN x. 7—9.—“Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.”

EPH. ii. 18.—“For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.”

CHRIST is not only our Shepherd, but He is also the door for the shepherds, the ministers of Christ; and for the sheep, the people of God. Our blessed Lord represents Himself as the door both for ministers and people, to show that salvation is to be obtained by *immediate* and *direct* access to Him. There is no other door between the soul and Christ which must first be passed through. Men erect other entrances rather than go *directly* to Christ. The doors of feeling, of priestly intercession, of good works, of ordinances, are all looked to and tried; but none of these are the proper

entrance of the soul to God and salvation. Christ Himself is the door. All who climb up any other way are thieves and robbers ; we cannot have access to God our Father, but through Christ as the door. This is a truth with which we are all familiar ; but really to perceive and enter into the spiritual signification of these words, "I am the door of the sheep : by me if any man enter in he shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pasture," needs the teaching of the Divine Spirit. Like all the relations of Christ, it has a deep spiritual meaning, which we need to realize in our own personal experience. We want to know Christ as the door or entrance to God the Father, really to enter through Christ to the love and favour of God. This is no mere theory or figure of speech ; it is a great reality. You may be as conscious of entering into the fold or favour of God through Christ, as of entering the house of God through the door. Christ invites us to enter this enclosure through Him—"I have set before thee an open door," is His language. Beloved, this inquiry is of the first importance. Have you entered through Christ as the door into the fold ? Do you understand all that is involved in entering in through Christ Himself ? Do you see how it implies the utter renunciation of self, of self-righteousness, and trust in self, and calls for the exercise of faith in Jesus only ? Blessed truth :

Jesus says, "I have set before you an open door," a door that is open at all times. No matter what may be our frames or feelings, the door is open; we can enter. The open door shows us the readiness of access, the freedom of entrance. All can enter through this door; all classes of men; all degrees of sinners are alike invited to come in and out, and to find pasture. "If any man enter in," is the Saviour's expression. He does not limit the entrance to the worthy, the righteous, the moral, but any man may come and enter in by this door.

"If any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture." As our entrance is to be a work taking place in this life, so are the results salvation, finding pasture.

If you enter by the door, you will have this evidence that you have entered by the guidance and protection of the Shepherd;—the communion you will have with Him, the spiritual sustenance, satisfactions and enjoyments He will give you. You will find pasture, and all your need in Him.

"He shall go in and out." This phrase denotes a habitual course of life, and includes the whole acts and habits of the life. The believer habitually enters through Christ the door. It is not that he has done so once and is satisfied with this, but he is doing so now. He enters now and continually through Christ the open door; he is familiar with

Christ as the living way, the means of access with the Father.

Beloved, will you not enter by this door? There is no other. There is only this one Christ, this one Saviour for you; "there is none other name under heaven given amongst men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts iv. 12.) It is not a knowledge of Christ that is entering in by this door. It is really trusting in Him, committing your soul into His hands. No door of morality, of self-righteousness, or of good works, is needed; nothing else can be substituted; it is Christ Himself, and Christ only who is the door. That door is open to you now. Now you can enter and find pasture; soon, very soon, it may be shut. "Behold, now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation." "To-day," saith the Holy Ghost, "if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

Ere it be too late, and life's course is run, enter by this door; you then will find pasture; the Good Shepherd will know you as His sheep; He will inscribe upon you His mark; you will know Him, and finally He will address you as His sheep in the last great day with those memorable words, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

AS RIVERS OF WATER.

PSALM LXXII. 6.—“He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass : as showers that water the earth.”

HOSEA VI. 3.—“He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.”

ISAIAH XXXII. 2.—“And a man shall be as rivers of water in a dry place.”

THESE words at once bring before us a picture of the earth after a long period of drought. We are all familiar with the reality. The hard and cracked ground, the scarcely verdant vegetation, the drooping flowers, the trees almost dead, and the cattle as parched as the earth itself.

This picture truly represents the state of the heart without Christ. Man without Christ is parched, withered, and spiritually dead. The world's history proves it. We can appeal to the ancient heathen, who were without Christ, in support of it. The Greeks and Romans, and even the

ews, at the time of Christ's coming upon earth, were in this condition, and so in our own day are other nations, families, and individual hearts where Christ is not. If your heart is sad, drooping, sorrowful, you may not know the cause, but it is here : Christ is not in it. It needs Christ, just as the thirsty earth requires the rain. How great the change when the gentle showers descend ; the earth is then refreshed, softened, and restored to its proper state for culture. There seems to be new life. All vegetation is revived, and appears verdant and beautiful ; the fragrance is most refreshing. Just so is the change in the heart, when Christ comes down and enters into it. He actually came down once upon the earth in human form. How refreshing was His influence upon all. The poor were made rich ; the lame man leaped as an hart ; the tongue of the dumb sang ; the blind saw ; the widow's heart leaped for joy, and sinners were brought to the conscious enjoyment of forgiveness. He then came down as rain upon the mown grass : as showers that water the earth." And this was only given us as a type of what His influence could be throughout all time. In that same manner, to do that same good, to exert that same influence, He said, " Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

How refreshing are His visits to us now. When

we are in distress, He comes to us and says, "Let not your heart be troubled." When cast down by sin, He says, "I have blotted out thy transgressions as a cloud, and thy iniquities as a thick cloud." He is now ready to come into our hearts and contribute to our life and spiritual growth, just as the showers contribute to the life and growth of the fruit and products of the earth. We have all to lament that an oft recurring phase of our experience is that of spiritual barrenness. We want at such times to learn actually to receive Christ, so that He may revive all our drooping graces, and enable us to grow and bring forth fruit. Nothing but the showers will effect the desired change upon the earth; and so nothing but Christ will soften, subdue, refresh, and enlarge the heart.

How often do you complain that you cannot realize great truths, that you cannot repent, nor pray, nor exercise faith in Christ. You then want to know the Saviour as being willing to come to you just as you are, to come to you just as the showers come to the barren, dry, hard earth. And He will come to you and revive in you all that is drooping and dead, and beget in you new life, and enable you to bring forth fruit, the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, temperance, faith. His attitude towards you may be *thus* set forth in the language of the inspired

prophet, Malachi iii. 10, "Prove me now herewith saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it!"

Oh! how blessed a thing it is when in your own life you feel your need of refreshment, when you are weary of the world, of yourself, of all around you, to be able to turn to Jesus, and obtain from Him renewal, invigoration, refreshment, and strength. He is more willing to come down and refresh and strengthen you thus, than you are to receive Him. In all your seasons of weariness, open your heart to Jesus. Go not to other sources; they will not give you the rest, the refreshment you need, but Jesus assuredly will. He says, "I will refresh you." He cannot lie; His word cannot change.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

OUR PASSOVER.

1 COR. V. 7.—“ Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.”

EXODUS XII. 13.—“ And when I see the blood, I will pass over you.”

THE Passover, or paschal lamb, was a most lively figure or type of Jesus Christ, and preached very clearly to the Jews the doctrine of the Gospel. The lamb without blemish signified the Lord Jesus Christ in His spotless perfection. The lamb was to be slain, and roasted with fire, to symbolize the agony and sufferings of Christ. The blood was to be regarded as precious, and to be sprinkled upon the two side-posts and upper door-posts of the houses. “And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: *and when I*

See the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt." (Exodus xii. 13.) In like manner Christ is our Passover. His blood has been shed for us. We must look to Him by faith, and this is equivalent to His blood being sprinkled or applied to the heart and conscience to save us. When it is thus sprinkled God will assuredly perceive it; the destroying angel will pass over that individual; there is no condemnation there.

This is a blessed and affecting relation Christ sustains to the soul—that of our Passover. It is fraught with great and endless comfort. When conscience reproaches and upbraids, you can immediately silence it by turning to the blood that was shed. When thoughts of the judgment-day fill your mind with terror you can look by faith to Christ, and can have perfect security in the thought of His finished sacrifice and shed blood.

His blood becomes our only protection and our only trust. When we have approached Christ in his relation we learn to feel just as the Israelites felt. They may have been conscious of much sin; and, when they heard the shriek of agony from the houses of the Egyptians, they may have felt they deserved like punishment; but they likewise felt the blood was sprinkled upon their door-posts, as God had commanded; they trusted in His word

and believed they should escape. For the ground of our confidence is the work Christ has done, the word God has uttered. Whatever our feelings may be, if we but look to the blood that has been shed, Christ is our Passover, and judgment will not descend upon us. There is perfect security for all who look to the blood, but speedy and certain destruction for all who have not taken refuge under it.

This relation also clearly shows us that our security is only in Christ; apart from Him we have no ground of confidence.

The Israelites did not dare venture from their houses into the streets; we dare not venture away from Christ; that moment we may become a prey to the tempter, or may be slain. A right view of this relation will lead us to strive that we may ever abide in Christ; it will subdue sin and temptation within us; we shall connect our sins with the slaying of the Lamb, and shall hate them, and resolve ever to forsake them, to sin no more. St. Paul directs us to this practical view of Christ as our Passover, slain for us, when he says, "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (1 Cor. v. 7, 8.) What feelings of grateful love will a right view of this relation beget in us! We shall see how much

Christ has done for us ; how great is the debt we owe Him ; how utterly helpless we were, by anything we could do, to effect this redemption, this salvation, for ourselves ; and how perfectly He has wrought it for us.

Beloved, whoever you may be, whatever may be your character—whether highly intellectual, devotedly spiritual, or worldly, sinful, and careless, you want to know Christ as the Paschal Lamb, as the Passover slain for you ; you want to believe that He has, by His death and sacrifice, satisfied justice on your behalf, put away your sin, atoned for all your guilt, and that now, on the ground of this finished work, you can have the sense of pardon, the enjoyment of God's love, and freedom of access unto Him.

The Israelites, whatever might be their character, could take the blood ; and so, whatever may be the degree of your guilt, you may take the blood of Jesus Christ, which cleanseth from all sin. He is the Passover slain for you. His shed blood has been sprinkled before the mercy-seat in the holy of holies. God accepts it ; He is reconciled to the world. You are delivered while you look to it, while your trust is there. But you must feed upon Christ, just as the Israelites partook of the lamb. The bitter herbs were mingled with that food ; so must repentance, sorrow for sin, be mingled with

our faith. Their loins were to be to be girded as for a journey, as if ready to forsake all in Egypt; so, when partaking of Christ, must you be ready to forsake all that is sinful in the world; and then will you truly know Him as the Passover slain for you.

CHAPTER XL.

OUR SHIELD.

1. XV. 1.—“I am thy shield.”

PS. LXXXIV. 9.—“Behold, O God, our shield, and look
the face of thine anointed.”

ES. VI. 16.—“Above all, taking the shield of faith,
with ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of
the wicked.”

There are periods in our Christian life in which we have clear and powerful views of the enormity of sin, the strict demands of the law, the justice and holiness of God. The Holy Spirit induces conviction of sin, and, like Job, you are ready to confess, “I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes;” or, like the publican, you feel yourself unworthy to enter the presence of God, or even to lift up your eyes to heaven, and can only smite your breast, and exclaim, in half-suppressed tones, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” At all

such times you want to know Christ as your shield; you want to see that this is no mere figure of speech, but that Christ will really stand between you and justice, and will protect you from all the possible consequences of your sin. As a shield He will ward off from you the thunderbolts of God's wrath, and will Himself receive them. Christ Himself strikingly presents this truth to us when He says, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings." When a bird of prey is near, or when any danger threatens the chickens, the hen collects them and spreads her wings over them, and there remains, as much as to say, "If you would harm my little ones, you must pierce through me first." In the same way does Jesus cover, as with the shield of omnipotence, all His children who will come to Him at His call in the hour of danger, and who will place themselves under His protection, as under a shield.

But not only are we exposed to the strict justice of God, but danger also threatens us from the assaults of Satan and the powers of darkness—evil suggestions, temptations of all kinds, we are often subject to. At such times you must learn "to take the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

It is one thing merely to acknowledge that

Christ is a shield to His people, and quite another to know all that is involved in this relation, and so to understand it as really to flee to Christ at the time you want Him, and take shelter under Him as a shield. Unless you understand this, you will assuredly be often overcome in the spiritual conflict; your enemies will be too powerful for you; you will surely fall. But when attacked, from whatever quarter, if, by faith, you present Christ as your shield, you will be certainly victorious. Be sure that you truly know Christ, and put Him on in this relation, and then you will always sing of victory. In the hour of inward conflict, when all appears dark, and every ray of hope is excluded, and the remembrance of sin is vivid and powerful; when attempting to approach the throne of grace, but overcome with fear; when contending with the last enemy, Death; when contemplating the judgment bar, with all its awful realities and tremendous issues, let this be your one argument, "Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed."

Just as a soldier is well skilled in the use of his arms, and knows how to employ them in battle, so must you be well prepared, in the hour of inward conflict, to remember this truth, that Christ stands to you in this relation.

As His people's shield, He bore, when on Cal-

vary, all the wrath of offended justice that should have descended upon them. He is still ready to defend and preserve His people. We are liable to the great danger of forgetting this truth, of going forth alone to the conflict, and of succumbing to evil as though there was no hope of escape or conquest.

Christian, behold thy shield; employ at all times thy shield; let nothing put thee off from using it; there is no evil suggestion it cannot quell.

But perhaps you ask, "How can I always use Christ as my shield?" By simple faith in Him; He Himself will enable you to hold Him as a shield. The effort you need to make to grasp Him, to trust Him, He will assist you in making; the very energy you require to place Christ as a shield before you, and to lose sight of self, He will give. What boundless consolation is there in this relation of Christ to His people! As their shield, He is always present, always available, always willing to defend them. Surely, if we are wise, we shall be careful always to have Christ in us and around us, as our continual shield; and then no real harm can ever overtake us.

CHAPTER XLI.

OUR HOPE.

27.—“ Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

1. 19.—“ Which hope we have as an anchor of the
sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that
veil.”

1. 18.—“ Looking for that blessed hope, and the
appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus

one great source of strength, comfort, and
rest in the Christian life. Hope has refer-
ence to the future, but its blessings are realized in
the present. It is the privilege of every Christian
to have a firm hope or expectation of eternal
life and happiness in heaven. But the object
of hope is either to substitute a false hope for
the true, or to weaken the true hope in the
heart.

The only well grounded hope set before us in the Holy Scriptures is the sacrifice, the atonement, the righteousness, the person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The Holy Scriptures present Christ to us as our hope in a higher view than as the crucified, risen, or ascended Saviour. He is also presented to us as actually present, living, and reigning in us. Thus St. Paul says, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Col. i. 27.) "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope." (1 Tim. i. 1.)

This is why so many Christians have only a vague hope that their sins are forgiven, and that they are saved. They never advance to the perfect knowledge of Christ as their hope. They do not embrace Him in this relation. But when He is received into the heart, and when by His actual presence there He establishes His government over the whole being, there is then a well grounded hope. The earnest of future glory is already in the heart; a foretaste of the blessing of everlasting life is then realized. This then is the only true hope, and the only hope that Satan, the world, and temptation, can neither darken nor destroy. Christians are often in despondency, because they make their frames, experiences, and good works the ground of their hope; and when these alter

our hopes are darkened or destroyed. Whereas *Christ alone*, without any admixture of self or of good works, is Himself made the only ground of hope, it may be always bright and joyous; it will come immediately from Him who never changes, "but is the same yesterday, to-day, and ever."

But truly to know and receive Christ in this position as our hope, is the great struggle and difficulty that continually meets us. It is one thing to acknowledge Christ as our only hope, but quite another to rise to the practical knowledge and realization of it. Very much is involved in this. Perhaps you, beloved reader, are anxious to know how to realize this hope, Christ in you the hope of glory. You must then aim to have a spiritual apprehension of your own utterly hopeless condition without Christ. You must plainly see and feel that there is no hope of salvation upon legal or any other grounds. You must know your own helplessness in all your attempts to overcome sin or to resist temptation, and you must seek a revelation of Christ to you as your hope by the aid of the Holy Spirit. Above all, you must learn to know Him, not merely as the crucified and risen Saviour, but as the living Saviour dwelling in you, dethroning self and enthroning Christ to rule the heart and

When Christ is thus spiritually received and

realized in this relation, the soul learns to lean upon Him habitually, and to rest constantly upon Him as its hope. If a cloud should arise from any source to obscure the brightness of this hope, no useless struggles are then made to gather hope from past experience or present feelings, but recourse is had directly to Christ.

Beloved, are you willing thus wholly to renounce self and to receive Christ as your hope? Blessed indeed will your experience be, if Christ is thus accepted. Your hope will then be as an anchor, sure and stedfast. The storms of adversity will not affect it. It will stand fast for ever. The stedfast assurance of glory to come will shed a radiance and glory over the present. The heart will be filled with peace and joy. A holy influence will be exerted over the whole life: "Every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as He is pure."

This hope will enable you with confidence to enter into that within the veil, the very holy of holies, to dwell there and enjoy continually the presence of God and the conscious assurance of His love.

Aim then to seek the teaching of the Holy Spirit, so that casting entirely away every other confidence, you may be able fully, cordially, and joyfully to receive Christ as your hope. Ever

ember He is waiting to reveal Himself to you this relation. He is willing to receive and love you yet again. He will reassure your heart and dwell in it. He will chase every cloud away by His own word of encouragement and love, and will evermore come and dwell in your heart as the hope of glory.

CHAPTER XLII.

OUR WISDOM.

1 COR. I. 30.—“Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom.”

PROVERBS III. 19.—“The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath He established the heavens.”

CHRIST, when incarnate on the earth, was an expression or an exemplification of the wisdom of God. If we track all His footsteps, and listen to His every word, and analyse His every act, we cannot discover the slightest trace of folly. We see the wisdom of Omniscience that could look into the hearts of men. We feel we are in the presence of One who knows all things, past, present, and to come. In a moment He escaped the snares of the *Herodians*, the *Sadducees*, the *Pharisees*, and re-

led to others, as in the case of the woman of samaria, the secret depths of their own heart and their own past life. Since He has created the heavens and the earth, who can deny the highest wisdom to Him? Has He not exhibited it in the structure of every plant, and tree, and leaf; and does He not equally exhibit it in His relation to us in the moral and spiritual world? It is with this relation we are now concerned. Christ is our wisdom. He is made of God wisdom unto us. We want to see and know Him in this high spiritual relation.

The first condition of this knowledge is that we early understand our own spiritual ignorance and helplessness. All that you can possibly know or of value must come from Christ. You may have intellectual attainments of a very high order, but they will not avail you as to your spiritual condition, or as to your state before God. Even Paul, when led to see the truth, notwithstanding his intellectual attainments, immediately became a child, and cried, "Lord, what wilt thou have me do?"

In this sense we must all be converted, and become as little children. We must continually wait upon God, conscious of our own utter weakness, and helplessness, and ignorance, knowing that every step we take of ourselves is sure to be in the wrong

direction, and that every ray of light comes only from Him who is our wisdom.

We must believe and look to Christ as our wisdom. We must receive Him in this relation. "David said, I have more understanding than all my teachers, for thy testimonies are my meditation."

But he who has Christ of God made unto him wisdom, will be wise indeed. He will be wise unto salvation. He will know the mind and will of God. He will have that highest wisdom enabling him to manage his affairs with discretion; that true wisdom which will affect and exhibit itself in the life, as described by St. James, when he says, "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." How striking is his inquiry, "Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge among you; let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom."

This is the Bible estimate of a wise man. One who is pure, careful to avoid any defilement from error or sin. One who is peaceable, who lives peaceably. Gentle, ready to bear with the infirmities of others, and to interpret all things for the best for the sake of peace. Easy to be entreated, ready to yield to the appeals of good reason. Full

of mercy, making him pity others that are afflicted **or** that offend. Without partiality, not making distinctions between persons for worldly reasons. **And** one without hypocrisy, who is sincere, transparent, and open in all his doings.

This is the wisdom which comes from above, and which can be had only by the realization of Christ being made wisdom unto us.

Oh, that we knew Him, understood, and received Him as our wisdom. "He, of God, is made unto us wisdom." He is appointed to be our wisdom. We have but to renounce our own self-conceited knowledge, and submit to Him, to receive Him as our wisdom. This the soul is loth to do. It naturally prefers its own vaunted knowledge and power. But this we must learn, at whatever cost : that Christ alone is our wisdom ; that we are only truly wise as we submit to Him ; that our course is only a wise course as He directs it ; our way only a right way as He has marked it out for us.

Beloved, have you learnt this lesson, to depend wholly upon Christ ? When will you learn it ? Have not your own frequent stumblings and failures taught you that your highest wisdom is only folly ? Should they not lead you to accept Christ as your wisdom ? All will then be well. You will have the mind of Christ. You will gather directly from Him what His will is, and

your own course in life, your own heart and feeling will be a reflection of His ; and thus, in the highest sense, Christ Jesus will, of God, be made unto you wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

CHAPTER XLIII.

OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

JEREMIAH XXIII. 6.—“The Lord our Righteousness.”

ROMANS III. 25,—“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.”

2 CORINTHIANS V. 21.—“For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

THE one great problem that has ever agitated the depths of the human heart is, “How can man be just with God?” Conscious of his own unrighteousness and of the spotless purity of God, man has ever striven to discover how his sins can be forgiven, and how he can become just before God? This accounts for the heathen sacrifices and the various religions of the world. They are only endeavours to find an answer to this question: now

God has permitted men to work out this problem; and the obvious result is utter inability to give any satisfactory reply to it. Then it is, God in His Gospel reveals to us His own wondrous message, showing that He Himself can alone supply the answer to this question.

He reveals to us His own righteousness as our justification. Jesus Christ is the propitiation, the satisfaction for our sins.

He stood in our place, the place of the guilty, and took upon Him the sins of the whole world. Thus, once for all, He offered up Himself for us. He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, and by His stripes we are healed. His death was not merely the death of a martyr, but a real and veritable vicarious sacrifice for our sins, and He was in it truly a substitute for us. Nothing can be plainer than this language of St. Paul, "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

When on the cross He was regarded as the representative of sin for us. The law was upheld in its majesty; justice was satisfied. The object of all this being that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him; that we might inherit and partake of God's righteousness as that righteousness exists and is revealed in Christ; that we might

in and by Him be made righteous as God is righteous.

We all, beloved, need very much this knowledge of Christ as our justification. This only can still our fears, can bring us peace, or give us the assurance of pardon. It is because you do not thus believe in Christ that doubt, and fear, and despondency arise as to your acceptance with God. But if you believe in Him as being of God made unto you righteousness, there will be no room for doubt or fear.

All the suggestions of Satan can be met with this argument: Christ has died. When anticipating death, this truth will silence every fear respecting that solemn hour. In looking forward to the awful day of judgment, this plea will give boldness. "The Lord our righteousness" should be the spirit of the Christian throughout the whole of his course. From first to last, in every step and stage of his life he should learn to employ this truth.

This relation of Christ is opposed to self-righteousness in all its subtle forms. It shows us that good works, frames, and feelings, cannot enter into our justification before God. The Lord our righteousness can alone be our plea. This relation is likewise a test as to our condition before God.

Beloved, have you thus renounced all self-righteousness? Have you believed in Jesus Christ as

your justification? Have you the inward conscious joy which must arise from believing in Christ in this relation?

Let me beseech you to renounce, from this time, all hope from anything in yourself, and to trust to Jesus only. The righteousness of another, even of Jesus Christ, is offered for your acceptance. Will you be guilty of the folly of rejecting it? Will you vainly prefer your own righteousness to that of Jesus Christ's? Be not guilty of this crowning sin of all, but with feelings of grateful love accept Jesus Christ as your righteousness; then all will be well with you, and the joy of your heart will find expression in the beautiful language of Isaiah lxi. 10, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness."

CHAPTER XLIV.

OUR SANCTIFICATION.

1 COR. I. 30.—“Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us sanctification.”

1 THESS. IV. 3.—“This is the will of God, even your sanctification.”

1 THESS. V. 23.—“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly ; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

ALL Christians who have an intelligent interest in the Holy Scriptures are agreed upon the importance of sanctification. The strict meaning of the term includes the entire consecration of heart, mind, and will to God, and the regulation of the life, as a consequence, in obedience to the mind and will of God. Because of a misunderstanding of theological terms, it is by many confounded with justification. Those who thus confuse the terms speak of Christ as our sanctification. If by this they mean Christ has so perfectly atoned for their sins, that when they

believe in Him they are treated as righteous, that all their meetness for heaven is found in Him, we reply, we believe all this to be perfectly scriptural and true, but that this is not what theologians mean by the words, "Christ our sanctification."

But then, admitting the previous definition of sanctification to be correct, is there not a sense in which Christ is our sanctification? A sense that is of the highest importance, and yet has been very much overlooked.

Is not the notion that generally prevails respecting sanctification something like this, that at conversion God implants a holy principle in the heart, and that the believer has to nourish this, and so by the help of Christ to secure sanctification. This view of this important matter necessarily causes the believer to look at self continually, to see whether all is now right, to congratulate self upon any real or supposed advances, and to fix the attention upon legal working.

Now the scriptural view is Christ our sanctification. The Scriptures do not leave the Christian to work himself up to a certain standard by his own efforts, but they present a person, a holy living Saviour, who is able and willing to dwell in the soul to accomplish this object, to operate upon the heart, and to enable it to will, and to do of His good *pleasure*.

This view leads the Christian to feel and say, "I have no life, no holiness, no sanctification in myself; apart from Christ I have no moral excellence whatever, nor do I ever expect to have any. But yet I hope to attain a more perfect obedience, a more entire consecration than I now possess, and I know the sole means of attaining this is by receiving Christ, permitting Him to rule my will, and to dwell in my heart."

Thus the first step towards sanctification, as towards justification, is "Trust in Jesus." The look of faith, which assures you that your standing before God is one of righteousness and safety. The look to His cross as the perfect atonement—His spotless life as the example. The look which brings Himself consciously into your heart. The calmness, the peace associated with Him. The holy hatred of sin. The love of holiness. The desire for communion with God. The intense longing for a more entire consecration to Jesus, and a more perfect obedience in all things. This is the blessing of sanctification. It can only be secured by trust in Jesus. Christ must be known and believed in as the sanctification of the soul.


Beloved, you have desired sanctification—you have even prayed for it; but you have not realized it. This may show you the reason. Your method has been a legal one. You have sought it by your own

works. You have aimed to eradicate this habit, to overcome that sin ; to perform the other duty. This you have done with the hope that you will thus realize the end—sanctification.

But have you attained it? Assuredly not. How different will the result be, if your first aim be directed to receiving Christ—if you believe in Him as able and willing to be your sanctification ; as ready to come and dwell in you, and thus Himself to keep you from sin ; Himself with His own strength within you, to strengthen you for every duty ; and Himself by His own strong will overpowering continually your own perverse will, and inclining it thus to obey God in all things.

Christ is intensely anxious for the sanctification of His people. "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." He is willing to come and dwell in your heart as your sanctification. Will you receive Him? Will you yield up to His control your utmost will?

This is the Scriptural method to know and believe in Christ as your sanctification. The supreme attention will then be absorbed and directed, not so much to self as to Christ. Your efforts and struggles will then be directed to Christ. You will desire most of all to know Him, to receive Him. The effects of this will be manifest : your own inward experience will be calm, continuous peace and



. You will now triumph, where before you
y met with defeat. Self will be humbled, but
y in the right way; it will be humbled before
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l is made unto you sanctification.

CHAPTER XLV.

OUR SALVATION.

PSALM XXXVIII. 22.—“The Lord is my salvation.”

EXODUS XV. 2.—“The Lord is become my salvation.”

ISAIAH XII. 2.—“Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation.”

A state of salvation is indeed a truly blessed state. Rightly understood, it includes deliverance from sin and Satan, as well as pardon and everlasting life. Various figures are employed in the Holy Scriptures to set forth all the blessings it involves. It is rest to the weary; food for the hungry; liberty to the captive; clothing for the naked; health and healing for the diseased; strength for the weak; riches for the poor; and, in short, the one thing needful for man. All this Christ is to us, and the Bible teaches us to regard Him not *only* as our Saviour, but as our salvation. Many

Christians seem to regard salvation only as a state of mind arising from understanding and believing the doctrines of Christ. But it is something more than this. It is a real union of the soul with Christ. Christ Himself becomes our salvation. The doctrines of Christ are designed to lead us to a personal reception of Christ Himself to dwell within our hearts, to rule over us, and thus to become our salvation.

Christ has done all that is essential to enable Him to become salvation unto us. By His atonement, once offered, He has satisfied justice—the utmost demands of the law—and opened up the way for our honourable reception to pardon and favour. By His Holy Spirit He comes to us and convinces us of our need of this salvation; convicts us of sin; converts us from it, and gives us the earnest of everlasting life in our hearts; and above all, bestows Himself upon us as willing to dwell within us, and to be united to us for ever.

One very cheering aspect of this truth is, that it is our privilege to have a present realization of this blessing. Many think of salvation only as something far off in the heavens, which they must wait until the day of judgment to receive. But here we have Isaiah praising God, and saying, “Behold, God is my salvation.” The Psalmist likewise says, “The Lord is become my salvation.” The Bible

everywhere exhibits to us a present salvation. It tells us of a present pardon for our sins ; of rest, peace, and joy that are to be realized now ; of light and life for our present enjoyment. All who realize this will abound in heartfelt, joyous praise to God. Thus the Psalmist, "The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation." So also Isaiah xii. 2, "Behold, God is my salvation ; I will trust, and not be afraid : for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song ; He also is become my salvation." There is much in that expression, "I will trust, and not be afraid." "The Lord is my light and my salvation ; whom shall I fear ? The Lord is the strength of my life ; of whom shall I be afraid ?" "And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee : though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me."

In this spirit of joyous trust what difficulty is there that cannot be overcome ? What duty that cannot be performed ? What temptation that cannot be resisted ?

Beloved reader, have you yet advanced to the knowledge and belief of this great truth ? Can you say with Isaiah, "Behold, God is my salvation" ? If not, let me beseech you now to receive *Him*, and to believe in *Him* as your salvation.

“Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.”

All your attempts to secure salvation by works, by experiences, by good frames or feelings, will be utterly vain. “The bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it, and the covering narrower than that a man can wrap himself in it.” In whatever advanced stage of Christian experience you may be, all your attempts at self-justification are as vain now as at the first. Christ alone is all your salvation. Even now you can only come to Him just as you are, a helpless, guilty, undone sinner, and beseech Him to be your salvation. But you must come to Him as a little child ; having nothing, but willing to receive all from Him.

Thus, when weak, you will become strong ; when poor, you will be rich ; because the Lord Jesus Christ will Himself become your salvation.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE RESURRECTION.

JOHN V. 21.—“As the Father raiseth up the dead quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.”

JOHN XI. 25.—“I am the Resurrection.”

PHIL. III. 10.—“That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection.”

DEATH is always solemn, sometimes terrible. It is through fear of it are all their life long subjects of bondage. But such, however they may acknowledge the truth that Christ is the resurrection and the life, cannot have understood it; they cannot have a deep spiritual apprehension of it; they have never received the enlightenment the Holy Spirit would give them concerning Christ in this relation. We want to understand the spiritual meaning of *Christ's* resurrection, and of Christ as the resu-

tion. Just as St. Paul says, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection." We feel no doubt concerning the fact of Christ's resurrection, but have we fully understood it? Do we know its power? Are we acquainted with Christ as the resurrection? We want to see our relation to that fact, and to Him in it; that our connexion with Him is such, that because He rose we must rise; that He conquered death for us; that as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

Just as the disciples, to whom Christ appeared in His resurrection body had a difficulty in recognizing Him, so have we now. We want to advance to the yet higher knowledge of Christ as our spiritual resurrection. When we become united to Him, He raises the soul from spiritual death. We want ourselves to die the death of sin, and Christ will then be the spiritual resurrection unto us. He will raise us out of that death into spiritual life. That St. Paul had this deep spiritual apprehension of Christ as the resurrection is evident from the connexion in which these words occur: "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection." The previous verses speak of this death: the death of self, of self-will, of self-desire. "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for

the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." He both had known Christ as the resurrection; he knew Him then, and he wanted to know Him still. He must know Christ continually as his resurrection. So must we also. And if Christ is thus known to us—if He is thus realized by us, we shall have by this consciousness of what He is to us now, every fear allayed about death and concerning the future. If He thus raises my soul now from spiritual death, I know He will raise my body. With this high conscious enjoyment of spiritual life—of Jesus as my resurrection, can I fear the death of the body? Assuredly not. Let it come when it may, how it may, it is under the control of Jesus. He has conquered it for me. It is now only His messenger to draw me yet nearer to Him. I fear it not. All is well with me. He says, "He that believeth on me shall never see death." This revelation of Jesus to us will not only allay all our fears respecting our own state, but will also give us great comfort with respect to our bereaved relations and friends who are dear to us. The keys of the gates of death are in the hands of Him who is the Resurrection and the Life. Not one can pass those portals but He permits; not one can be lost; He will restore them all. They are not dead, they sleep in Him; they rest in His bosom; they are watched over by His

omniscience ;—His honor, His word, His very being are all engaged to restore them ; and they will be restored. The sea shall give up its dead. “ All that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth.”

Dear reader, do you know Christ thus as the resurrection ? Have you embraced Him in this relation ? Have you thus looked to Jesus when gloomy thoughts have come over you about death—about your own death or the death of your friends ? In spiritual death, and all the despondency and darkness arising from it, have you turned to Jesus as the resurrection ? He is willing to come to you in this relation. He will chase away the coldness, the darkness, the surroundings of death from your mind by His own presence, just as He dispersed them when He pleased from His own tomb, causing light and glory to take their place. Nothing can withstand His power. The thick shades of sin He can dispel ; the darkness of despair He can make light. He can extricate you from the depths of sorrow and distress. Just as He stood by the grave of Lazarus and awakened him, and just as He will stand at the last great day and awaken all, so will He awaken you now. He will call into action the dead spiritual powers within you. He will even now be to you the resurrection, if you will listen to His voice. “ The hour is coming ; and now is

when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." Jesus has been speaking to you. His still small voice you have often heard. Listen to it now; obey it now, and you shall live and participate in the glorious and perfect resurrection.

CHAPTER XLVII.

ALL AND IN ALL.

COL. III. 11.—“Christ is all and in all.”

GAL. VI. 14.—“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

1 COR. X. 31.—“Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

THE *Bible* has throughout one object in view, to reveal a living Saviour to lost man. Its histories, laws, prophecies, messages, poetry, arguments, all bear upon this great truth. No one can attentively peruse the sacred pages without perceiving that Christ is all and in all in the Bible. It is only as we look at its contents through Christ we can see clearly its great meaning. He is there set before us in different aspects and relations, that we may know Him and believe in Him as all and in all. So is it with the *Christian religion*. Christ is

its centre. He is the all and in all of Christianity. All the doctrines and truths of our religion acquire a deeper interest and meaning as they are viewed in the light of Christ's person.

So Christ should be all and in all in our experience and life. We are His creatures; it is but right He should enter into all our life. Omniscient, omnipresent, He knows all our life. Omnipotent, He can and does control our life. It is ours to recognize this; to believe in Him as being all and in all; to make Him thus consciously to ourselves the all in all of our experience. Jesus is intensely anxious to be known and recognized thus by us. He is slighted, injured, grieved, insulted, when He is not. If He is not all in all to you, yours is a Christless, Godless, hopeless life.

But in the experimental realization of this relationship there is more involved than may at first sight appear. To make Christ the all and in all, implies that we yield all our will up to Him, and entirely in all things submit to His guidance. Our thoughts and affections all are to be given to Him. Our lot and pathway in life. Our engagements, our prospects, our desires, must be yielded up to Him. It is to say in affliction, bereavement, or sorrow, "Thy will be done." It is to have the conviction, God has done it; that He is ordering our steps in life. It is to look up to Him con-

tinually as our all and in all, while we stand ready to obey when we ask, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" "All my springs are in thee."

God often tries us as He tried Abraham, to see whether He is our all and in all. He tries us, not that He Himself may gain the knowledge, for He is an omniscient Being, and knows all things, but for our sakes, that He may in this way give us to know the true state of the case. Trial often brings this before us more powerfully than anything else. God knows where and when to touch the apple of the eye, and often by depriving us of the idol, He proves to us we love the earthly object more than we love Him, and that thus He is not all and in all to us.

Thus, it will be seen, this relation of Christ aims a death blow at self, at sin, and at all forms of selfishness and selfish love. Christ all and in all. It destroys self-will, self-trust, and self-conceit. It humbles the soul before God. It makes us deeply conscious of our own weakness. It leads everyone who realizes this relation to say and feel, "I have no good in myself; I have, when left to myself, no disposition to think a good thought; I cannot advance one step in the Christian life of myself; blessed Jesus, be thou all and in all to me."

But this is the great conflict of the Christian life:

to humble, nay, to crucify self, and to exalt Christ ; or, rather, to place self in its proper position and to suffer Christ to take His rightful place in our hearts which self, sin, and Satan have usurped, so that He may at all times reign over us as our all and in all. This is a hard lesson to learn. It may assume ten thousand different forms, but the germ of the difficulty is here. To overcome it we must learn to make self nothing, and Christ all in all. When we have a little joy, a few triumphs or successes in the Christian life, often we inwardly gratulate ourselves, and say, "I am getting a good Christian ; I think I shall do now." Rather should we say, "Christ has begotten some good desires in me, and has given me a measure of success ; let me learn from this to cleave closer to Him that He may be all and in all to me." When we have arrived at this point, we are in a state in which we can be blessed, because we have fulfilled the conditions. Hence, no experience is more truly blessed than that where Christ is made the all and in all of our life. The believer who has learnt this lesson, is indeed blessed, and as one calmly fixed upon an immovable rock. He can say, "Christ is my justification, not self, and what He has done saves me. In my desire for a sense of pardon, for the enjoyment of peace, it is not what I am, what I *feel*, or what I can do, but it is what Christ has

done, and what Christ is to me that brings me these blessings. Let the thought of this stay my ambitious feverish desires. Let me have a higher view of Christ, that I may see Him as all my satisfaction. Let me so know Him that in my temptation He may be my defence; in my darkness, my light; in sorrow, my joy; in despondency, my hope; in Christian attainments and advances, in prayer and communion with God, in patient waiting upon and in active work for God, He may be my all and in all.

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